Florida WILDLIFE

FISHING FLORIDA'S FRESH WATERS

PANFISHING PARADISE

THE CHAIN PICKEREL

MARCH, 1956

The Florida Magazine for all Sportsmen

25 CENTS

10

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FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S

Fishing Citation

"for that BIG ONE that DIDN'T get away"

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

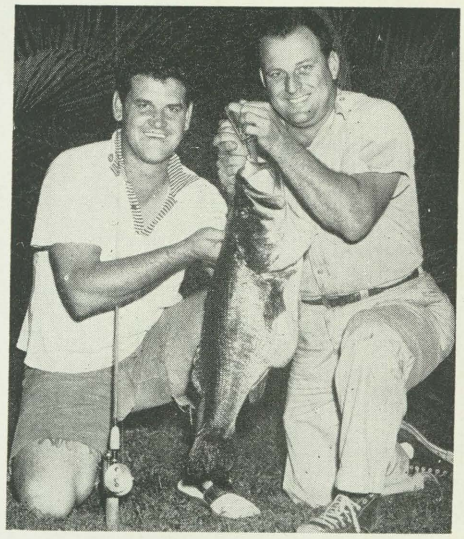
All fish must be taken from the fresh waters of the state of Florida, as defined by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Fish must be caught on conventional fly, spinning, or bait-casting tackle, with artificial or live bait, in the presence of at least one witness.

The catch must be weighed and recorded at a fishing camp or tackle store within the state by the owner, manager, or an authorized agent of the respective establishment.

Application for a Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation must be made within 10 days of the date fish was caught. Application must be made on the prescribed form as shown on this page. (Requests for additional forms should be addressed to: Florida Wildlife, Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Florida.)

Citation, showing recorded data of the catch, will be mailed to the applicant upon receipt of application form that has been properly filled out and signed.

The receipt of any and all photographs pertaining to the registered catch, including the applicant and the fish, will be appreciated by the editor for use in Florida Wildlife Magazine.



Florida Wildlife Fishing Citations are available without charge, to any and all subscribers to Florida Wildlife Magazine, and their immediate families, who catch any of the following fresh-water game fish of the prescribed size requirements:

SPECIES	
LARGEMOUTH BASS	8 pounds or larger
CHAIN PICKEREL	4 pounds or larger
BLUEGILL (BREAM)	1 pound or larger
SHELLCRACKER	2 pounds or larger
BLACK CRAPPIE	2 pounds or larger
RED BREAST	1½ pounds or larger

CUT OUT AND SAVE THIS APPLICATION BLANK

APPLICATION FOR FLORIDA WILDLIFE FISHING CITATION

The Editor, FLORIDA WILDLIFE Date_____
Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla.

Please send me the Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation with the inscribed data listed below:

Name_____ Address_____

Species of Fish_____ Weight_____ Length_____

Type of Tackle, Bait Used_____

Where Caught_____ Date_____

Catch Witnessed by_____

Registered, Weighed by_____ at_____

_____
(Signature of Applicant)

VOL. 9, NO. 9

Florida WILDLIFE

MARCH, 1956

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Published monthly by the
FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION
Tallahassee, Florida

★

**Dedicated to the
Conservation, Restoration, Protection of Our Game and Fish**

★

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STRIKES and Backlashes

Dear Mr. Editor:

I enjoyed your article "Way Down Upon the Suwannee" by Charles H. Anderson in the February issue. In one place you stated "Wildlife in the woods and swamp areas on both banks of the Suwannee withstand terrific hunting pressure. Two of Florida's most sought after species, the white-tailed deer and wild turkey are taken in number in Madison, Taylor, Dixie and Suwannee Counties." I would like to know where the Suwannee River banks border Taylor County and in what part of Suwannee County you can find deer?

I have lived in Lafayette County 47 years and have been hunting since I was old enough to carry a gun. I take great pride in telling you we have both the whitetailed deer and wild turkey and our County borders the Suwannee River on its east side. "Why did you ignore us?"

JOHN PRINCE
Day, Fla.

. . . You are right and our apologies for omitting Lafayette County. Actually, the Suwannee River flows through, borders, or touches the Florida counties of Madison, Lafayette, Dixie, Hamilton, Suwannee, Columbia, Gilchrist, and Levy.

———

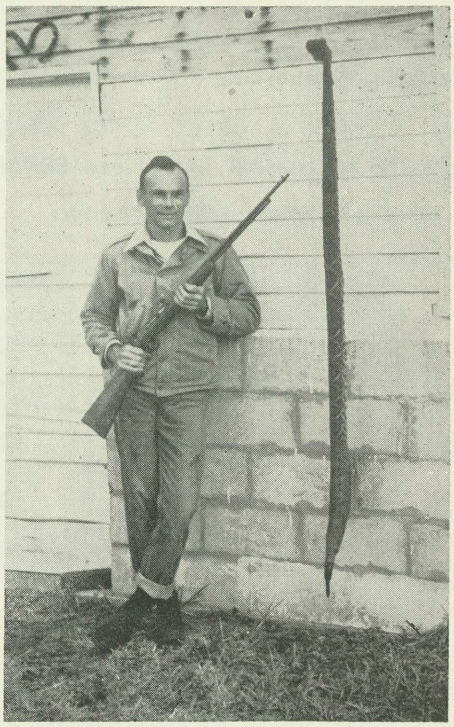
Gentlemen:

After hunting all season without setting eyes on a buck we finally ran across this fine, three point buck the afternoon of the last day of the season, which proves to the boys "never to give up."

The fellow on the left is Earl Wysong of Miami. On the right is Lou Graham the lucky hunter.

Keep up with your fine magazine. It is the best of its kind.

LOU GRAHAM
Miami, Fla.



Gentlemen:

Enclosed is a photo of a six-foot-three-inch rattlesnake I shot while home on Christmas leave. Thought your readers might be interested in a picture of our "small" snakes.

F. R. HARDT, N.S.N.
c/o Fleet P. O., New York

———

Dear Editor:

I recently spent two wonderful weeks fishing in Lake County where I caught a most satisfactory number of bass, bream and crappie.

While staying at Tavares I met several other fishermen all from northern states and all subscribers to *Florida Wildlife*. We got to wondering in how many of the states you have readers. I think it would be interesting to the readers of your fine magazine just how many states are represented in your monthly mailing.

RAY PLOTT
Milwaukee, Wis.

. . . Florida Wildlife is mailed each month to subscribers in ALL 48 states plus England, Liberia, Alaska, Australia, Canada, Cuba, Guatemala, Hawaii, British West Indies, Japan, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Sweden, Yugoslavia, and Switzerland.

Gentlemen:

The enclosed clipping tells the story. Please read and let me ask that you good people do something about it.

Our yard which is usually alive with birds is almost devoid of them today. I think the toll is beyond our comprehension and something should be done about it. I hope the remedy suggested will be carried out and will not prove just conversation.

Magazines such as yours with your influence should be most effective and I trust you will take proper steps to further the cause.

J. P. BALL
Orlando, Fla.

. . . The newspaper article that Mr. Ball refers to can be found elsewhere in this issue under the title "Airports to Filter Death-Trap Lights."

———

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is an application by my young son, Tom W. Brown, age 14, for *Florida Wildlife's* Fishing Citation covering a 10 pound, 12 ounce black bass caught by him on a rod and reel a week ago today.

I also enclose snapshot of him with the fish if you can use it.

CLARENCE E. BROWN
Lake City, Fla.

———

Mr. Editor:

On page 35 of the February issue of *Florida Wildlife*, Mr. Chuck Schilling says, and I quote, "The true angler cares not for the fish, large or small. The fish are only an excuse to be out of doors. The fish are a focal point around which revolves the intricate pattern of man's kinship with nature and his awareness of it."

To that first sentence I say NUTS! I agree with the communing with nature piece of philosophy but I defy anyone to say that a good fighting fish plus a good

JUNIOR CONSERVATIONIST

By DENVER STE. CLAIRE

As THIS is being prepared in Lake City in the Northwest Region, the thought comes to mind that starting with this New Year, we have placed on the agenda a visit to each club. The purpose of these visits is to meet the members and officers, check the club for operation and progress, observe the procedures during meetings, compare notes with the senior advisors and counselors, get acquainted with the new members and clubs, give out as much information as possible, and help strengthen the weak clubs and make the strong clubs stronger. So be on the lookout for a visit.

Compilation of Points

This is being written during January, and our staff is still compiling points for the outstanding club of the year 1955, and also studying the reports from the various clubs who have nominated their top three members for the Outstanding Junior Conservationist of the Year. It is the hope of this department to have all these results in the April issue of *Florida Wildlife*.

Camp Survey

Near the end of last December, 189 questionnaires were sent out to the many campers who attended last summer's camp at Lake Eaton. At this writing, 103 answers have been returned and more are still coming in for study. This is a sampling survey designed to find out what our campers liked most, and to find out what improvements can be made for this year's summer session. When these returns are complete, they will appear in this column.

The second pages of this survey will be sent out to a similar number of campers who attended in 1954. We are quite anxious to hear from them, too. So, boys and girls, be on the lookout for this questionnaire. All you have to do is check your answers and fill in the space provided for remarks. Here you tell what you did or did not like, and any other pertinent remark which will help us to make this a better camp. We all want it to be the very best.

Club Secretary Reports

It seems that in every issue of this column, the subject of sending in reports finds its way into print.

Somehow, the secretaries of the many clubs in the state just do not seem to realize the importance of reporting for their clubs.

In the headquarters of the Youth Conservation Program, there is a very large file. Within this file is a folder for each club that has been organized since Jan. 7, 1952. Each folder has the name of the club typed on a tab. And in this folder, all material pertaining to the club is filed. This includes reports of meetings and activities in conservation projects, letters of correspondence to and from, pictures, newspaper clippings, and any other factual information about the club.

The folders that are thick and bulgy are those clubs that are active and have active recording secretaries who get the necessary information to this office. And, by contrast, the folders that are thin suggest an inactive club and very poor reporting by the secretary.

Why are these so important to this office? It is one certain way we have of knowing what is being done and how much you are accomplishing. It tells us how many members you have and how many are attending. The report relates how your meetings are planned and just what kind of business is being conducted. It tells us who your advisors are, and how often they attend. There is so much information we need to know. The changes in finances, the elections of new officers and changes of address are important—most important. All of this helps us serve you better.

Right now, this office is preparing a new League directory. We need the meeting places of the clubs, the time of meetings held, where and how often and when. Information is needed as to officers and senior advisors and sponsors.

ALL OF THIS INFORMATION CAN BE GIVEN ON THE SECRETARIAL FORMS MADE AND SENT OUT FROM THIS OFFICE.

Again to the officers, and to the senior advisors or counselors, strive to have your reports in for our records. Don't wait and save them. SEND THEM IN NOW.

After each meeting, send in your report, and be sure you send a copy of the same report to your Information and Education Officer of your Region. For further information, here is a list of these officers and their mailing addresses:

Mr. Edward Timmons
207 East 15th Street
Panama City, Florida

(Continued on Page 43)

---

fish dinner isn't the main essence of the "true angler's" fishing trip.

LES LIEBERT
Miami, Fla.

Dear Sir:

Am glad to see you folks taking an interest in the Chain Pickerel or what I call a "Jack," have maintained for years they should be classed as a Sport Fish as they always put up a fight for their weight.

I used to catch a world of Jacks and mudfish up in the old Okefenokee Swamp years ago, the lowly mudfish will give you a fit too, especially on light spinning tackle.

I have been catching quite a few small Jacks down in Lake Geneva near Keystone Heights and on Jan. 7 of this year I got one that measured 21" in length and only weighed 2 pounds and 7 ounces on a certified store scale. I took it on a Humphreys spinning reel. It fell for a 1/4 ounce slow sinking silver Mirrolure.

L. C. HILL
Jacksonville, Fla.

Gentlemen:

I noticed in my last copy of *Florida Wildlife* three letters from servicemen. It never dawned on me before that a subscription to this magazine is the perfect thing for Florida boys away in the armed forces.

Enclosed is my check for three subscriptions to boys now in the Army. I think it would be a nice thing if all the Florida service men could have this contact with home. This letter could be used as an appeal to their families and friends to see that Florida Wildlife is sent to them while they are far from home.

MRS. K. KLOSSON
Tampa, Fla.

FISHING

By CHUCK SCHILLING

OF ALL THE SEASONS of the year, spring is the most rewarding to the angler. Even in Florida, where our seasons are not noted for their variance, spring touches the earth with a magic wand and through the alchemy of nature, quickens the step and brightens the eye with its promise of new life.

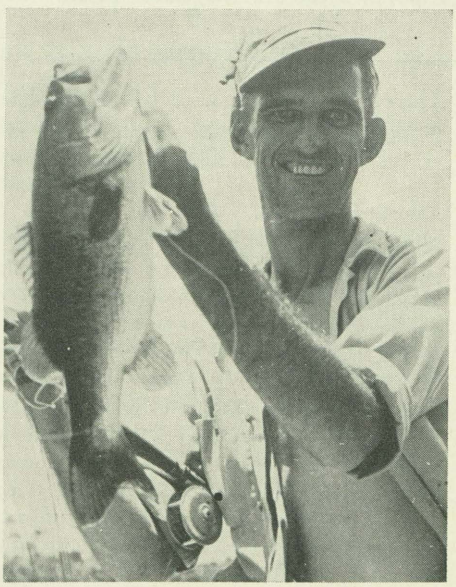
In the spring, all nature unites in a conspiracy to forget the hardships of the winter just passed. All of God's creatures, including you and me, feel this stirring. If you are an angler in the Florida spring, you are doubly blessed, for here nature and the season have truly "gilded the lily." I have long considered springtime, fly rods and popping bugs as synonymous. Perhaps this is so because in this season, I love to wade the backwoods ponds and savannas, getting into the cool water, feeling the hard sand underfoot, and breathing the peculiar odor of the swamp that is brought to the surface by the gas bubbles released by my passing. Moving slowly through the shallows of some lonely backwoods pool is one way of losing yourself in an awareness of man's oneness with his environment.

As I wade along, I work a small, yellow or brown popper. Here is where the short, light fly rod really comes into its own. I use a 3½ ounce, 7½ foot dry fly rod with a level "D" line. I taper my leader down to 4 pound test and really do business with these frisky springtime fish.

In this springtime wading, the casts are short, seldom over 30 or 35 feet. A wading fisherman doesn't seem to scare the fish, as they apparently pay no attention to you if you are in the water with them. I try to wear clothes that will blend with the background. White canvas shoes soon take on a natural coloration. I have found the olive drab of G. I. fatigues admirably suited for wading pants. Close attention should be paid to the clothes that stay above the water. I try to avoid bright colors in my shirt and hat, particularly the hat. This is the most easily seen piece of your equipment from the fish's point of view, and it should be as inconspicuous as possible.

However, it's almost impossible to wade with a fly rod in the spring without catching a lot more fish than you can ever use. In fact, I one time caught the same bass three times in a row from the same pothole. He was that determined to knock a yellow bass bug out of the water.

Spinning tackle is, also, well suited to this springtime wading. Again, stick to top water lures to get the most fun from this fishing. Six pound monofilament and tiny top water plugs are murder. My favorite is the South Bend Spin-I-Diddee in Silver Flash finish. This ¼ ounce plug has spinners fore and aft and a double set of gang hooks. In water where the grass is really thick, I sometimes cut the bottom hooks from the gangs, making this little killer practically weedless. As with popping bugs, the word here is slow—slow—slow. Particularly is this true when fishing for bream with top water artificials. Bream will usually take a lure much more readily if it is lying perfectly still.



Tom Dewberry, a yellow popping bug, and a Florida bass meet in a springtime ritual as typical as sulphur and molasses or sassafras tea.

A mistake many waders make is favoring the open, easy to navigate waters. In the spring, the fish will usually be found back in the weeds or "hayfields," rooting for choice morsels in the thick cover. I have caught many a 5 pound bass out of holes in the grass hardly larger than my hat. I do a lot of this fishing in the Jensen Savannas, and I concentrate here on the alligator holes and their trails through the grass.

One of the most exciting parts of this thin water, wet foot fishing is having a big fish swirl at your feet, scaring you half out of your pants and then streaking off, pushing a "V" bow wave ahead of him. Sometimes a plug or bug tossed in front of such a fleeing fish will cause him to change course slightly and rush the lure. Allowing the lure to remain motionless while this speeding juggernaut rushes down on it is one of the most difficult accomplishments in sport fishing.

If all the bass that have had lures jerked out of their mouths by anxious anglers were laid end to end, they would reach to the moon. Mine, alone, would reach to the stratosphere. But even if you heave at the wrong time, you'll still get a big kick out of it.

I once laid a popping bug in front of a moving bass and then, in nervousness, jerked it from between his jaws as he struck. The force of my ill timed strike threw the lure in back of me, where it tangled in the branches of a low tree. I stood helpless watching the bass dash all around the pothole looking for the vanished lure. He acted much as does a dog looking for a bone in the dark.

It was really funny. NOW—that is.

If you are new to springtime wading, get set to collect a surprising dividend. There lurks in the fresh

waters of Florida a much maligned fish that nonetheless will give you some anxious moments and regal sport on light tackle. The Eastern Chain Pickerel is a member of the *Esox* family that, also, sports such respected game fishes as pike and muskellunge. I have caught all three of these fish from Canada to Florida and, in spite of all the romance and ballyhoo, have found little to choose between them pound for pound on light tackle.

A five or six pound pickerel is a good sized fish, and a ten pound one should be kept for a look at the record book. But large or small, the pickerel is a fish that need not apologize to anyone. These fish haunt the weed and grass beds. They are greedy and voracious feeders and will take a top water bait all out. They jump cleanly and, when tiring of an aerial fight, will bulldog it for the bottom with a strength and courage that leaves little to be desired. In the spring, pickerel are particularly pugnacious and, like their big cousins, ask or give no quarter. If you are in the habit of sticking your thumb in a bass's mouth when landing him, check that impulse with the pickerel. These boys have teeth and can salad shred a thumb quicker than you can say, *Esox reticulatus.*

Spring is the season of youth—not that adults need stay indoors. Spring belongs to all who are young in heart regardless of their age. If you are young in spirit and have a companion who is young in years, then springtime fishing is made to order for you.

In this magic season, the bridge that spans the gulf between youth and age sits solid on firmly anchored foundations, and traffic flows freely in both directions. Perhaps if you can help a youth become aware of the vistas that lie beyond the portals of angling, you can, at the same time, recapture for a moment the freshness of perception the passing years dull for all of us.

I remember a spring in my own youth when the Kentucky hills were getting their first hint of color from dogwood and redbud. I was on a dandelion hunt, picking the first tender white growth from under the piles of leaf mold on the south side of a tumbling creek.

I had half filled a dampened flour sack with these delicious greens when I saw a man ahead of me lying full length in the sun, peering over a limestone ledge into a pool below.

He motioned for me to be quiet and join him. Stretched out on the warm stone with the sun on our backs, we watched a big, brown trout rising to a hatch of flies in the clear water below us. With hardly a movement of his fins, the fish would float to the surface to dimple the water in his feeding.

Any time is the right time to take a boy fishing, but in the spring, all nature is working with you to make the trip a success.

He was rising from a position on the edge of a ripple, and his feeding was as regular as the swing of a pendulum on a grandfather clock. Somehow the rising trout, the silent stranger at my side, and the warm spring sun blended into an experience so rich it caught at my throat.

At last, the trout missed a fly and leaped a foot in the air to prevent his escape. This seemed to break the spell, and with hardly a word, the stranger and I parted. I walked home practically floating on the spring scented air. Such moments are not common, but if there is any clue to their attainment, it would be in the springtime.

A full moon peeks over the eastern horizon, silhouetting a group of leaning palm trees against its silver face. A boat with two silent figures drifts in the path of moonlight and slips beneath the moss hung arms of a stand of cypress trees.

A gentle spring breeze wafts the heady perfume of orange blossoms across the rippling waters. The cry of a night bird breaks the stillness with its lonely echoes.

Romance in the making?—Not at all. Just a pair of big game bass fishermen taking advantage of a moonlight, spring night to add to their laurels. On moonlight nights in the spring, the big bass really go on the prowl. Even if you don't care for this type of fishing, you owe it to yourself to at least go out on the water under these conditions and listen to the noise of their feeding.

I have seen and heard big bass literally tear a small lake to pieces in the moonlight of a spring night. This is a job for stout tackle, for the deceptive light of the moon will deceive your casting eye, and the tackle used should be heavy enough to allow you to pull your plug out of the bonnets and grass when you get hung up. The best plugs for night fishing are those that make the most fuss on the surface. The more racket, the better. Just confine the noise you make to the plugs and not to your feet in the bottom of the boat.

You never need wonder where the bass are feeding on moonlight, spring nights. You can generally hear them long before you get your boat in the water.

You paddle quietly toward the sound of the feeding fish. You can just make out a line of grass and bonnets close to shore. A bass strikes on the surface with a sound like

(Continued on Page 41)

When combined with a long, limber pole, the pictured tackle items will outfit a Florida cane-pole fisherman in style for catching bream, crappies or any of a half a dozen other Florida panfish species.

PANFISHING

"HERE'S MY NEW address, Jim," a suburban New Yorker said recently as he handed his mail carrier several filled-in change of address cards. "I'm going to Florida to live—and fish! There are millions of panfish down there just waiting and daring me to catch 'em! . . . I know; I've fished there in past years. No other state can match Florida's fishing!"

Our new neighbor (because he is already down here, settled and out fishing as this is written) is not alone in either his thinking or his fishing, or in citing fact.

According to Francis Wyley Hall, of Jacksonville Beach, who compiles a lot of interesting information about Florida fish and fauna, an estimated 92,600,000 pounds of freshwater fish—including millions of panfish—were taken by sportsmen in a single year. The figure checks with that mentioned in a report for the same period by the Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission. Further research shows that it is typical of annual yields.

Barring unprecedented decimation by some natural catastrophe, following or coinciding with heavy fishing pressure, or careless pollution of widespread water areas by man, it is unlikely that Florida's fresh waters will ever be depleted of panfish populations. In essence, the situation is much like an item in a Ripley *Believe-It-Or-Not* column—that if the Chinese people should march four abreast at normal parade pace past a given point, the march would never be completed! Untallied millions would succeed themselves, through children and grandchildren before a complete march could ever be made. Florida's panfish populations in the state's larger lakes and streams have similar perpetuation.

Represented panfish species are many, in some localities being so numerous and hybrid as to cause considerable confusion as to exact identities and agreed-upon common names. Especially plentiful in Florida's fresh-waters are such popular species as Bream or Bluegill; Warmouth or Warmouth Perch; Spotted Sunfish or Stumpknocker (of which there are several varieties); Black Crappie or Calico Bass; Shellcracker or Red-eared Sunfish; Speckled Perch, and Red-breasted Sunfish or Red Bream. The favorite five, however, are the Bream, Black Crappie, Warmouth, Shellcracker and the Spotted Sunfish or Stumpknocker, in the probable order named. With Florida residents and visiting anglers they rate tops!

But, aside from angling for pleasure, Florida's panfishing is also seriously and assiduously performed by countless individuals who depend on their legal catches as supplementary table fare for themselves and families. Although all Florida resident fishermen are millionaires, not all can compute their wealth by the dollar standard! To them, panfish sizzling in a frying pan are important to their food budgets.

To enjoy Florida's superb panfishing, it is merely necessary to go to the nearest freshwater lake, river or pond. Access to 166 rivers and more than 30,000 lakes gives Sunshine State anglers uncrowded sport. In Lake County alone there are some 1,400 lakes to provide elbow room and good fishing. No matter where an angler may live in Florida there are freshwater fishing spots literally at one's back door or within easy travel.

Among the many widely dispersed areas that have earned fame by reason of their varied and plentiful panfish populations are such places as the waters of the Wacissa-Aucilla rivers of Taylor, Jefferson and Madison counties; Blue Lake; Lake Easy; Crooked Lake; Panasoffkee Lake; Lake Apopka; Lake Harris; Lake Deacon; innumerable lakes around Eustis, Tavares and Mt. Dora; Lake Asby; Lake Okeechobee; the St. Johns river, Suwannee, Kissimmee, Crystal, Withlacoochee, Chipola, Chassohowitzka, Homosassa, Choctawhatchee and Wakulla rivers; Ochesee Pond in Jackson County; Taylor Creek in the north end of Lake Okeechobee, and the Dead Lakes region of Gulf and Calhoun counties. In the last named locality, untold schools of big bream, particularly, help make the Dead Lakes angling anything but dead!

Hundreds of other unnamed, or locally named ponds, contribute liberally to the total of millions of Florida panfish caught by sport fishermen each year. It has been said that one might spend a lifetime panfishing in Florida waters, angling in a different spot each day without ever fishing them all. However, like the New Yorker who retired and came to Florida to live and fish, you can try.

In summarization, Florida panfishing centers not around the question of where in Florida to find panfish but of what tackle and how.

No special angling skills are needed to catch Florida panfish, but, as might be expected, those anglers who know their fish, have the proper tackle and who

are flexible in both viewpoint and applied techniques are usually the ones who take the largest fish and who also seldom return home empty-handed.

Although there is much these days that is new under the Florida sun, significantly, certain basic principles of successful panfish angling continue unchanged and are religiously observed by the more successful panfish anglers—exactly as advocated by Dame Juliana Berners, Prioress of Sopwell Nunnery, in her book, *The Book of St. Albans,* published in 1496 (but probably written much earlier). In brief, Florida fishermen of 1956 still endorse and practice Dame Juliana's recommended fishing techniques—"to keep as far away from streambank as possible, out of sight of the fish; to avoid making shadows or reflections on the water with your body or your rod; to make the strike neither too fast, too slow nor too hard, and to keep hooked fish always under the working tension of the rod." Modern anglers can also credit Dame Juliana with the good advice of opening the stomach of the first fish you catch to determine the natural food on which it has been feeding—and then use identical natural baits or close imitations.

While Florida's more expert pan-fishermen still follow Dame Juliana's centuries-old, four-point advice, their tackle reflects many changes.

However, the combination of cane pole, attached line and bobber has lost none of its early popularity or efficacy. Beyond doubt, more Florida panfish are taken on natural cane poles than any other tackle. For one thing, they are readily available and inexpensive. Florida tackle dealers and bait vendors sell them in a volume of thousands every month. But the domain of King Cane Pole is being invaded by comparative strangers!

One might spend a lifetime panfishing in Florida waters, angling in a different spot each day without ever fishing them all.

PARADISE!

By EDMUND McLAURIN

One old tackle-making firm, the Richardson Rod & Reel Company, in connection with its 50th anniversary, has just come out with a new line of rods, one of which is a fly-rod weight, telescoping tubular glass panfishing pole that can be lengthened or shortened to remain constant at any setting between five and nine feet. Actually, their lightweight cane pole is a regular weight fly rod with only a tip ring guide; it telescopes to a convenient carrying length of about thirty-four inches. This glass resin product is far stronger than natural cane, yet weight and action are comparable to bamboo.

Longer and less specialized, but equally convenient in respect to telescoping features, are Orchard Industries' "Extendo" and South Bend's "Lazy Day" new fibre glass versions of the all-time popular cane pole. In these modern creations, panfish poles up to twenty feet in length quickly telescope to car carrying storage.

Once a cane or glass fibre pole of desired length, weight and flexibility has been selected, the Florida panfish angler should give equally unhurried attention to rigging it with the strongest and least visible line obtainable. Many Sunshine State anglers, who regularly fill frying pans, favor lengths of modern monofilament line; others prefer braided nylon or linen, finding these far stronger and more durable than once popular cotton or silk line material.

Newest of all is Gladding's "Clearon" monofilament line, imported from Germany. This line, made in four pound test and up, is not visible in the water at all and is also smaller and more uniform in diameter than previous products, users say.

Commercially assembled and carded cane pole lines, equipped with proper panfish size hooks and bobber or sinker, are now obtainable at very low cost. Two such products popular with Florida panfish anglers are the "Getzem" and the "Carolina" rigs. The first features a neutral colored nylon line, a tiny split shot sinker and a small red and white cork and a gold plated hook. The "Carolina" rig is packaged with either split shot sinker or cigar-shaped cork float that offers desirable sensitivity to fish strikes, an Eagle Claw No. 6 Carlisle hook and eighteen feet of light green nylon line. Either can be found on the counters of Florida sporting goods stores and on the shelves of merchants near recognized good panfishing spots.

Whatever your line material choice, however, first attach your line well back of the pole's tip; then wind the line spirally up the pole until the tip end is reached. Finally, secure it with two half hitches. This method of rigging a cane pole takes much of the angling strain off its tip and cuts down on the

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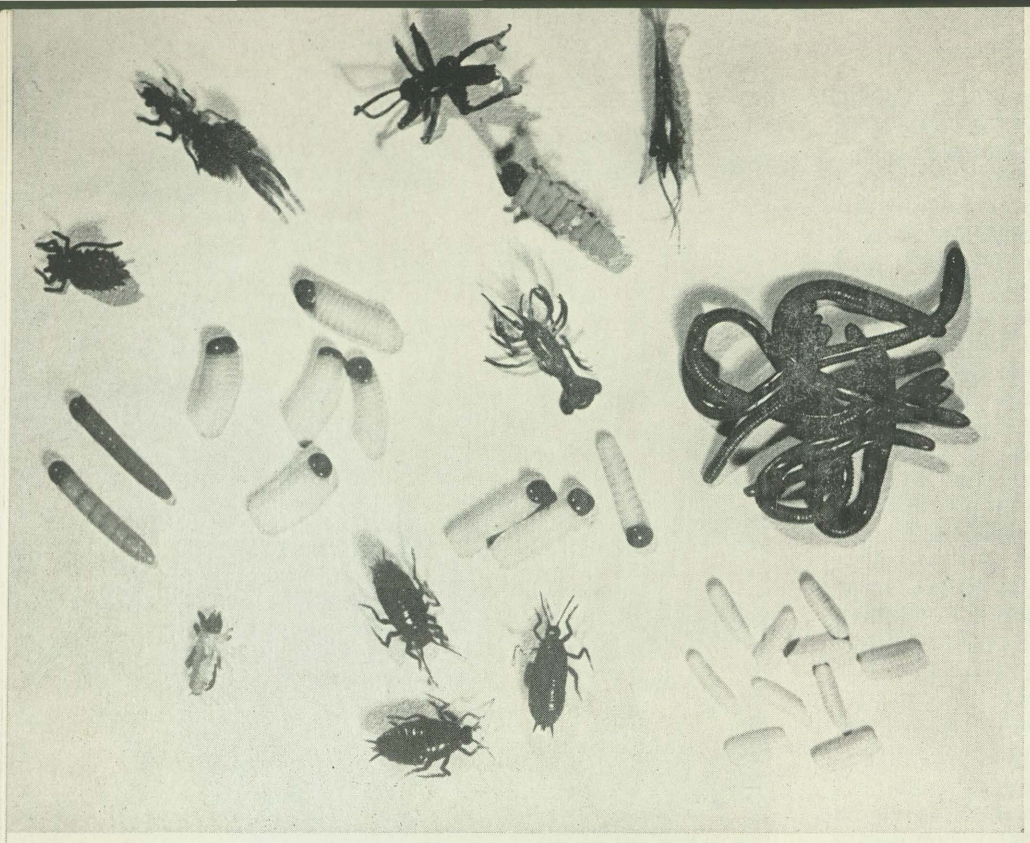

For catching Florida's many panfish species, natural baits can usually be depended on; are generally easy to obtain. Earthworms, grubs, maggots, crickets, grasshoppers, roaches, catalpa worms, crayfish, freshwater shrimp, small minnows, snails and insects and insect larvae are panfish delicacies.

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chances of experiencing a broken pole and lost fish. Allow a working length at least as long as the pole, with bobber and hook attached.

Try using an old, discarded fly rod, similarly rigged, as a cane pole. It will give you greater water coverage than the usual cane pole and its action will be fast and thrilling to the hand as a biting fish is struck and hooked.

Snap-on bobbers, especially if they are of clear plastic "bubble" style, are commendably convenient and practical. Changing their location on the line, to properly correspond with water depth and fish feeding conditions, is easily done with the incorporated snap-on feature and, once positioned, such bobbers stay put. Users of spinning tackle employ the plastic bubble style floats as helpful casting weights by partially filling them with water to create any desired weight. In addition to using them with natural baits, they combine them effectively with choice dry flies, for variety.

Bait casting rods see plenty of panfishing service in Florida, too. As a rule, the solid glass models are stronger than hollow types. However, the latter are lighter and generally have better action. For the average angler, a choice can be made on a coin toss-up. It is only the veteran anglers who find such marked differences that they may argue advantages and disadvantages at length. Glass rods are constantly being improved—and that can be said for both solid and tubular types. Some of the four ounce glass bait casting rods used by Florida fishermen for panfish and bass angling are strong enough to lift eighteen pounds of dead weight and bend to an extreme of a 110 degree arc if a fishing episode should ever demand such a demonstration of rod strength and flexibility. Most broken rods are the fault of the angler, not from hard hooked fish.

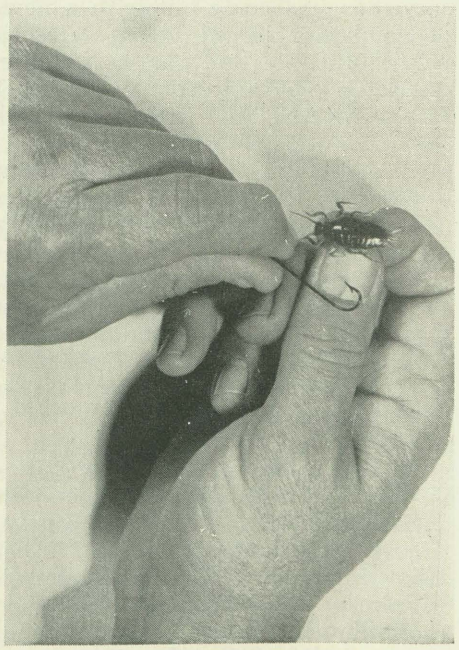
"Doc" Howe, of St. Petersburg, who regards fishing as life's primary interest and who nomadically covers Florida's best fishing spots by an almost continuous itinerary, has long liked a 6 ft H&I #206 bait casting rod blank, custom-finished by Sherm Seebree, another expert. Howe matches finished rod to a Shakespeare Ultra - Sportcast reel with carboloy bearings and a plastic or balsa arbor-filler. He combines this main equipment with a high grade braided nylon line and a four or six pound test spinning leader ten to twenty feet long with a tapered knot connecting line to leader and a tiny safety snap at the business end for quick change of lures. With it, Howe has taken thousands of Florida freshwater fish using lures weighing next to nothing up to one ounce.

Walt Willman, a former national casting champion and now dean of the St. Petersburg Rod and Gun Club's college of casting, also favors a six foot, limber bait casting rod for panfishing when he elects to set aside his favorite fly rod. He likes the added leverage and action that a long, limber rod gives the angler out for panfish. Willman's outfit in the bait casting category is usually a matched Heddon "Pal" reel and companion rod. His line is fine diameter Dacron carrying a long monofilament, practically invisible leader with hook or lure attached directly, without connecting hardware. In his conducted fishing school, Willman emphasizes that the lighter and less visible the line and leader the more panfish you will catch. He proves his theory by taking many panfish every year.

Good fly rods for panfishing are those in the four to five ounce class, from seven to eight feet long. Those of Orchard Industries, South Bend, Orvis, Wright & McGill and Richardson manufacturers are among favorites.

Fly casters who have fished considerably with spinning tackle and thereby learned to reel with the left hand are now keeping the fly rod in their right hand at all times and finding it less tiring than the customary left-hand hold.

In a spinning rod for Florida panfish angling, consider one six and one-half feet long with an action that will cast very light lures with a selected light line—four pound



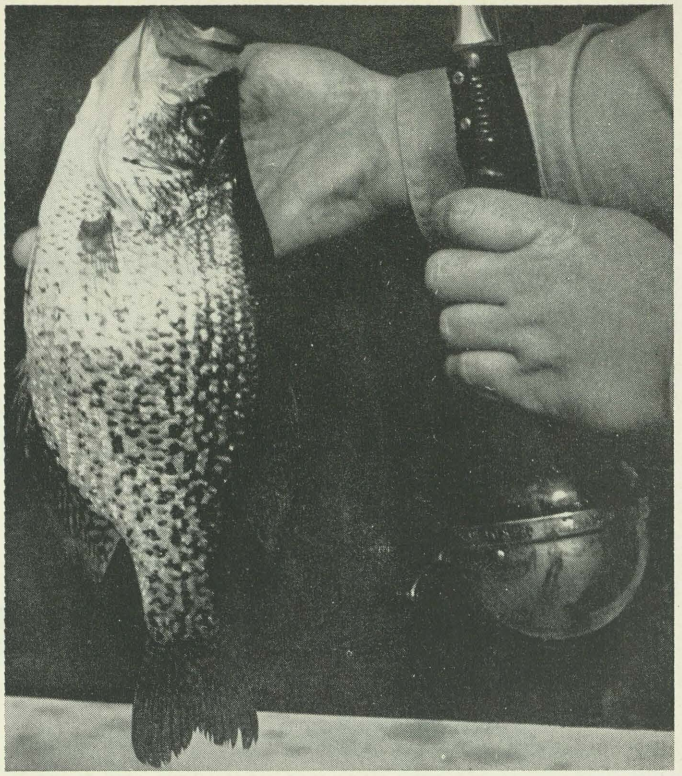
Live roaches are excellent bait for big bream. Other Florida panfish like them, too.

test preferably. Such an outfit is admirably suited to probing deep water holes with midget lure for crappies and warmouth.

Little things can mean a lot when one is panfish angling. For example, a natural nymph characteristically swims with his head upstream. If, therefore, an artificial nymph bait is cast directly upstream, the leader from the eye of the hook will usually cause the bait's head to turn unnaturally downstream—a discrepancy in natural nymph action which wise (and usually large!) fish are quick to note and view with suspicion. Properly, the nymph should be simultaneously cast upstream and across so that the current will cause it to take a natural position and movement.

Again, merely using a hook that is too large and heavy for the weight and action of the natural insect baits commonly used will make for poor fishing. Experienced anglers know that bulky, heavy hooks are not needed for panfishing; even light wire hooks as small as No. 12 short shanks have sufficient strength to hold average panfish.

In the matter of hook choices for Florida panfish, there is considerable varied opinion. For bream long shanked Carlisle hooks in size 6 are popular, while for speckled perch a No. 4 size is often preferred. Some mighty successful Florida pan-fishermen like a No. 10 Model Perfect—holding a medium sized worm. Others swear by a thin shanked Wright & McGill Aberdeen-style hook in either size 6 or 8, claiming that either choice will hook Florida panfish better than the Carlisle pattern. For crappies, certain proponents will have no other hook than a No. 8 Sproat. Obviously, all named must be good as Florida panfish catchers; otherwise they wouldn't have their staunch advocates.



The speckled perch or crappie is a panfish favorite.

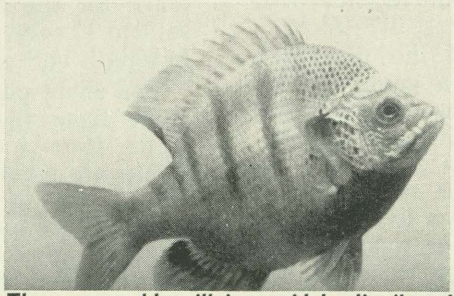
Substitution of barbless hooks for the barbed variety will enable the panfish angler to successfully return to water many undersized fish that otherwise would be mortally injured by hook extractions. Undoubtedly, more widespread use of barbless panfish hooks can contribute considerably to Florida fish conservation.

For an alert, skilled angler, a barbless style hook will catch just as many—and often more—fish than a barbed one. Primary reason is that the barbless, but more pointed type, will penetrate easier. Secret of successful use, advocates confide, is to keep a hooked fish on a tight line pulling against a live, limber rod.

When barbless hooks cannot be readily found in sporting goods stores, regular styles can easily be altered by snipping off, or pinching down, barbs with pliers.

Leading Florida's panfish popularity poll is the bream or bluegill, especially numerous around lily growth, rural bridges, weed beds and deep water holes. When these fish take a baited hook they invariably run for cover.

Most times, Florida bream take baits readily. On other occasions they can be temperamental and bait choosey. At such times maximum fishing skill and substitution of extra light leaders will be needed.



The scrappy bluegill is a widely distributed species and the standby of Florida panfish anglers.

Still-fish for bream on the bottom with earthworms, catalpa worms, crickets and insect larvae. Live roaches are excellent and rate with earthworms and grubs as bream delicacies. Exploded popcorn can be tried if insect naturals, or imitations, are totally lacking.

However, artificial flies on No. 12 or No. 10 hooks will usually take more bream than natural baits. Phil Francis, Clewiston panfish expert, finds a size 14 brown bivisible dry fly, used during late afternoon with the minimum of rod action, especially deadly. Small rubber spiders, deer hair surface bugs, the G-K Special in bream size are good, too; so are certain small spinner and spoon combinations. Light leaders at least six feet long are best. You'll find Lake Wilmington the home of some mighty big bream—also Lake Okeechobee. You merely have to locate resident schools.

Habitually, bream remain in schools for most of the year, preferring brush and weedy areas not far from the water's edge. The larger fish tend to maintain school formations and favor deeper water than the smaller fish of nomad inclination who frequently wander away from formed schools.

Fortunately for the angler, bream have a characteristic odor. It is this factor that gives away favored bedding grounds. When congregated in numbers, these fish can actually be located by smell. Lucky, indeed, is the bream fisherman who has a companion with olfactory ability to detect and pinpoint scattered bedding grounds of schools of bream. Such a man waves no magic wand, nor voices imprecations accompanied by mystic gestures; his nose tells him when he is close to the bedded bluegills. To him, the odor of wet, decaying wood rising from a sluggish

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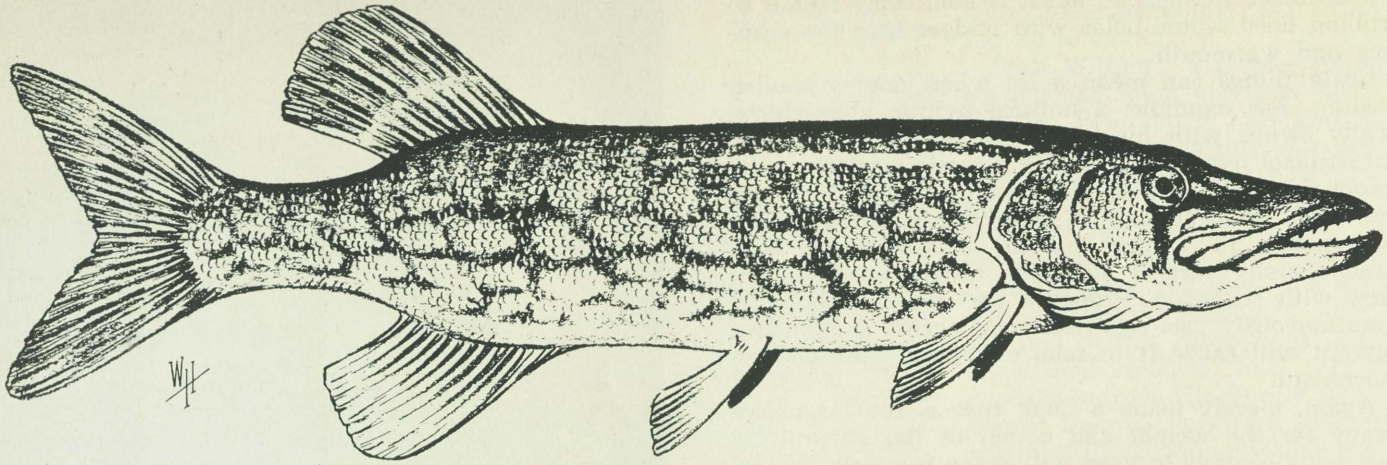

The Chain Pickerel

So BRILLIANT is the limelight in which bask Florida's world-famed largemouth bass that scarcely a ray of illumination has been allowed to filter through to fall on another freshwater worthy, the chain pickerel. As a matter of fact, most southern anglers are inclined to cast a jaundiced eye on the "jack." When one does fall victim to the bass fisherman's offering many bash in the head of the despised "snake" and toss him overboard, irritated by the interference with their bass fishing pleasure.

In the more northerly portions of the pickerel's range he is eagerly sought both as a game species and as a food fish. There is good reason for his acceptance as a freshwater worthy for the pickerel possesses all the qualities demanded of a game fish; he may be taken with a variety of tackle ranging from cane pole to fly rod; he will seize upon a live minnow, a crawfish, an artificial fly, a plug, or a spoon; he puts up a fight that would do justice to many another more popular fish twice his size; and when properly prepared he makes good table provender.

In the past there has been a considerable amount of confusion regarding the proper relationships of the various branches of the *Esocidae,* the scientific family which includes the pickerels, pike, and muskellunge. The pickerel is often mistaken for a small pike and with good reason for in body conformation there apparently is a striking similarity among all members of the family. All of the group have a long slender body, a single soft-rayed dorsal fin set well back on the body, and a long flattened snout which gives an appearance somewhat similar to that of a duck's bill when viewed from above.

The pickerel family includes four species: the northern pike, the muskellunge, the barred or red-fin pickerel, and the chain pickerel. To the casual observer, the similarity in appearance among the various members of the family somewhat confuses the issue of proper identification. The distribution of scales on the head offers the most certain means of separating the three groups. In the case of the pickerels, the gill covers and the cheeks are entirely scaled. The pike has cheeks and upper gill covers which are scaled but the lower parts of the gill covers are not. The lower halves of cheeks and gill covers of the muskellunge are without scales.

Of the two species of the family which occur in Florida, only the chain pickerel is of much interest to the sports fisherman. It is not that the redfin or barred pickerel does not possess the voracious appetite that makes his larger cousin a ready and willing mark for the angler, but rather it is the fact that seldom if ever does the "grass pike" exceed one foot in length and one pound in weight.

The chain pickerel, *Esox niger,* derives its common name from the characteristic wavy dark markings which form a chain-like pattern on sides and back. There are local variations in the basic colors of this fish as there are in most fresh water fishes. Depending upon the locality, the back coloration ranges from green to a dark brownish green, shading into a greenish yellow on the sides and belly.

The chain pickerel occurs throughout most of the eastern half of the United States from Canada southward through Florida, west to Texas and up the Mississippi Valley at least to southern Wisconsin. Their popularity in some localities has resulted in the stocking of suitable waters formerly lacking pickerel, therefore there has been an artificial extension of the range of this species over that which occurred under natural conditions.

As might be expected of a fish which range encompasses several geographic sections of the country, a variety of names have been applied to the chain pickerel. In various localities he is known as jack, jackfish, pike, green pike, blue pike, grass pike, hammerhandle, banded pickerel, barred pickerel, black pike, duck-billed pike, snake, and Federation pike. Some of these names also are applied to the smaller redfin pickerel.

The chain pickerel is an early spring spawner. The exact time of spawning varies somewhat with the particular locality, being earlier in the year in the southern portions of its range and correspondingly later toward the north.

An everage of from 1,500 to 3,000 eggs are deposited on the bottom, usually in shallow grassy waters or over soft bottoms where there is little if any current. The male and female swim together over the shallows during the spawning activities. The actual spawning site is often a small patch of open water in a lake or streamside marsh. The eggs are released in adhesive strings which stick to the submerged vegetation and to the detritus lying on the bottom. The eggs are deserted as soon as they are deposited. They hatch in an average of about 15 days, the exact time depending upon the temperature of the water. An abundance of predatory species in the vicinity of the favored spawning sites results in a relatively high mortality rate of both eggs and young. The early development of the young pickerel is rapid and within a couple of weeks the small fish are well embarked upon their predacious, and often cannibalistic careers.

In the choice of habitat, the pickerel prefers the cleaner, quieter portions of streams and the grassy, weedy, or stump-filled areas of lakes. It is seldom that both chain pickerel and largemouth bass are abundant in the same body of water, a situation which is not unexpected where two highly predacious forms are concerned. In various bodies of water where the recognizable physical features appear to be identical, the relationship of the two species will practically always favor one or the other. Because of the similarity of the demands for food and cover on the part of these two predacious species, there is evidently little possibility of peaceful co-existence.

For a number of years, the record chain pickerel was listed as a 10-pound 10-ounce specimen but subsequent investigation showed that the earlier identification was erroneous. The record sized "pickerel" was found to be a northern pike. The present official record is a 30-inch, 9-pounder.

The lack of widespread interest in the pickerel as a game fish has occasioned a dearth of reliable length-weight figures for Florida waters. From the relatively small amount of data available, it appears that the average weight of Florida chain pickerel is in the neighborhood of 3 to 4 pounds, with occasional specimens of considerably larger size being taken in various localities.

Chain pickerel are predacious fish, ever seeking a variety of animal life to sate their voracious appetites. On some days it appears that they will attack anything that looks even remotely as though it might be edible. The usual objects of their gastronomic attentions however are frogs, minnows, worms, snails, insects, leeches, and crayfish. Mice and even small birds may be devoured by pickerel whenever the opportunity presents itself.

The feeding habits of this species lend themselves to a variety of angling methods. Many pickerel are taken each year on cane pole and live minnows, usually while fishing for crappies or bass. Bait casters will find them ready and willing adversaries on top water plugs as well as sinking models in a great variety of colors and styles. Since minnows make up a large portion of their diet, those plugs which resemble to some extent a bait fish are preferred.

Small fishes are captured with a sudden lunge. Should the fish enter the pickerel's mouth any way other than head first, the pickerel will usually mouth it until it is turned around and then swallow it head first. For this reason, a quick strike immediately following the pickerel's hit on a live minnow bait will often result in a missed fish. It follows that the angler should allow the pickerel to make an initial run, mouth the bait and then start to swallow it before attempting to set the hook.

Streamers or bucktails are productive for the fly rod enthusiasts. Sometimes a bit of added inducement in the form of a number 2 nickle or brass spinner ahead of a streamer will turn the trick on a pickerel which seems reluctant to hit. Small deer hair frogs are often productive fly rod lures for pick-

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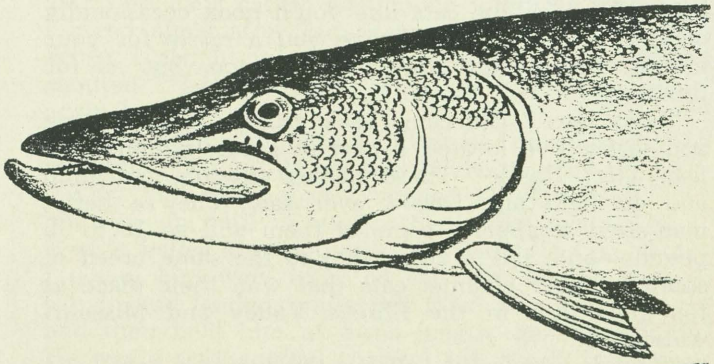
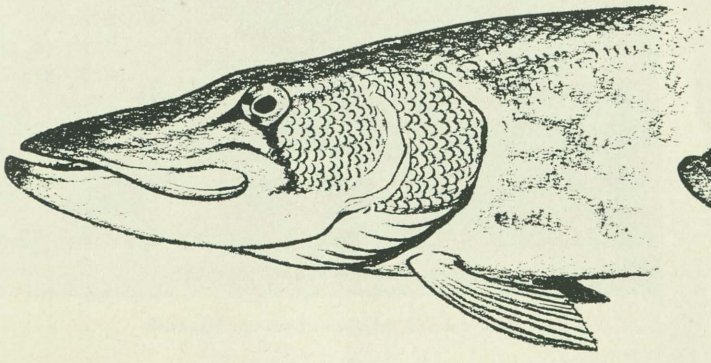
Identifying characteristics of the three groups of the pike family.

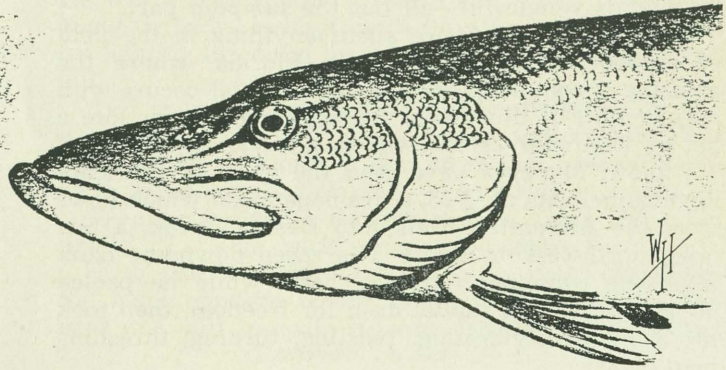
BELOW: The gill covers and the cheeks of the pickerels are entirely scaled.

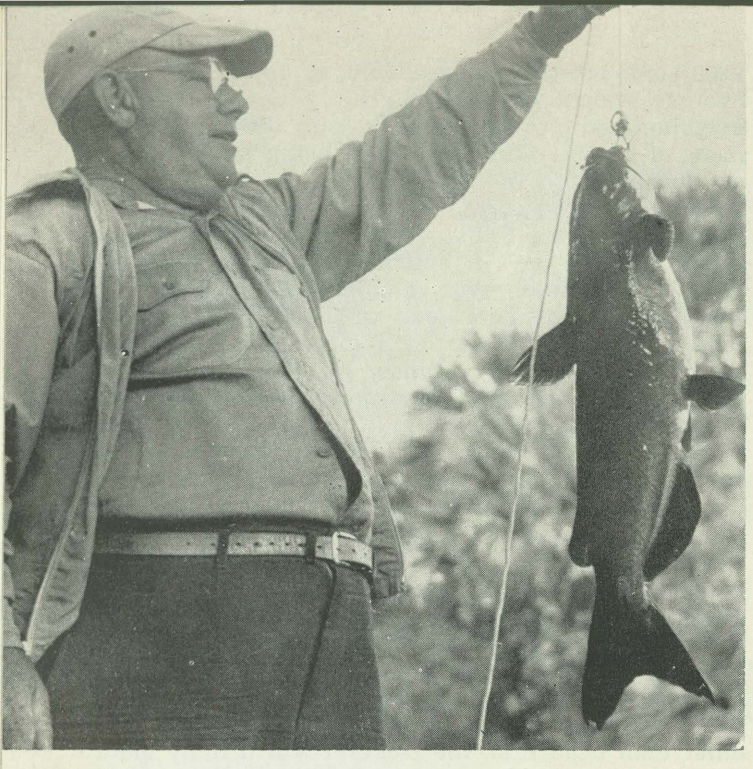
UPPER RIGHT: The cheeks and upper gill covers of the pike are scaled but the lower part of the gill covers are not.

LOWER RIGHT: Only the upper half of the cheeks and gill covers of the muskellunge are scaled.









Bill Mitchell with a 7-pounder from South Fork.

GREAT JUMPING

By ERNEST LYONS

"THEY TAKE OFF like jets," Bill Abbott said. "They jump like crazy fools. I lost three rigs on them today. . . ." He saw my look of doubt. "Don't tell me," he asked disgustedly, "that you don't believe catfish jump?"

"Well, now," I answered guardedly, "I've caught catfish. Back in Mississippi, Grandpa and I used to run a trotline on the Leaf River. We caught plenty of big old cats. They *tugged* good. Made wonderful stew. I won't say it isn't *fun* to catch a catfish," I rambled. "You take those 20-pound or better Florida blue cats like you'll hook occasionally on the St. Johns, they'll give you a *rassle* for your money. Pretty fair stew material, too, but as for jumping—"

"Look here," Bill came back grimly, "listen to me and learn. I've located a nest of great jumping catfish. Tug? Rassle? These babies out-run, out-jump and out-fight any bass I ever saw. They're hefty, man-sized scrappers—some of them will go 10 to 12 pounds—and, if I'm right, they're the same breed of spotted fiddler channel cats that won their place as top game fish in the Illinois Valley and Missouri watershed."

"Sounds wonderful—all but the *jumping* part."

Never be too cocksure about anything in the field of outdoor sport, especially in Florida, where the amazing is commonplace and the unusual occurs with regularity. Put this down. Remember it. Never lose a bet on it. *Under certain circumstances, catfish jump!*

I know. My eyes have seen the glory of the leaping channel cats of C-23, a drainage canal which flows from the Allapattah Flats into Bessey Creek, a few miles northwest of Stuart. I've raced down the bank after one, spinning rod held high, while he peeled off 100 yards in a frantic dash for freedom, then took his distinctive, vibrating, twisting, turning, threshing leap in air.

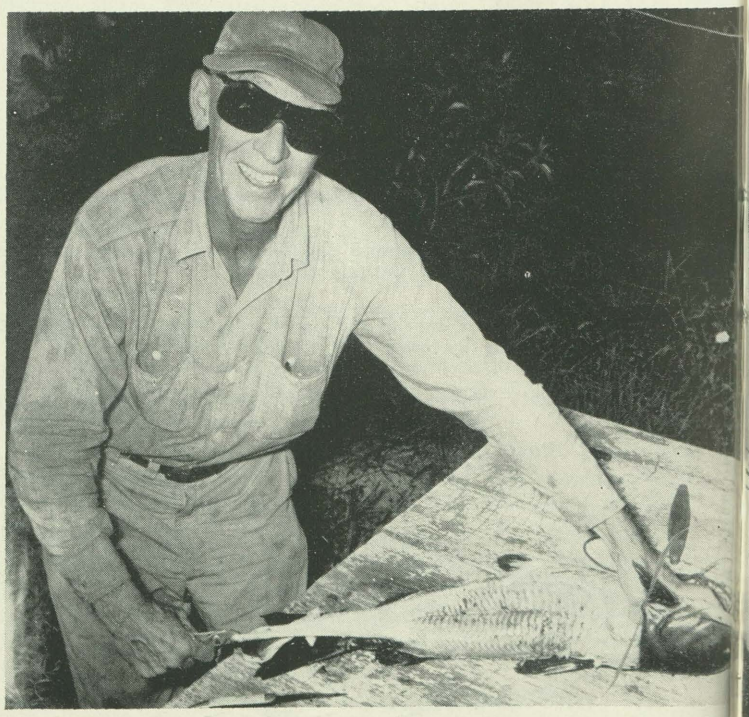
Every fish has unique characteristics and those which leap do so each after his own way: the black bass straight up, gills rattling, poised in air at the peak of motion, the snook with a slanting run, the tarpon often "up and over"—and I have taken photographs of all of them. All you need is a fast camera and a cooperating angler. There are seconds ahead when you can adjust focus, a rising line which warns that the fish is about to jump in camera reach.

My ambition now is to get a photo of a channel cat in air. In my personal opinion—and I have tried—it would be the outstanding action shot of fishing photography for 1956.

Bill tooled me out in his Model-A Ford through the piney woods to the raw gash of C-23. Frankly, I looked forward to a dull morning (except that I had smuggled my flyrod and casting outfit along). Up till then, these new waters of South Florida that go by alphabetical and numerical names on the systematic maps of the U. S. Engineers and Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Commission, had left me more than cool. "Look how they're tearing up the country," I said to Bill. "C-23! What a heck of a name for a place to fish. Now, if it was called Otter Creek, Deadwater Creek, Blue Hole, Mossy Run or Bassy Branch or—"

"Jumpin' Catfish Pool?" grinned Bill.

"Yeah, like you call this car Old Liz. If," I hastily corrected, "there really were jumping kitties in it."



Abbott skinning a big "stew cat."

"Uh, huh," he replied. "That's the way I felt, too." He braked Old Liz to a stop at the brink of C-23's second spillway. The canal is about 25 miles long, built in three levels about six years ago. One hundred feet wide, it is "just right" for plugging or fly-casting. As I looked down into the foam-flecked waters of the pool under the spillway, a bass struck in a swirl. I reached for my fly outfit. "Later," he said. "You're the guy who claims that catfish don't jump."

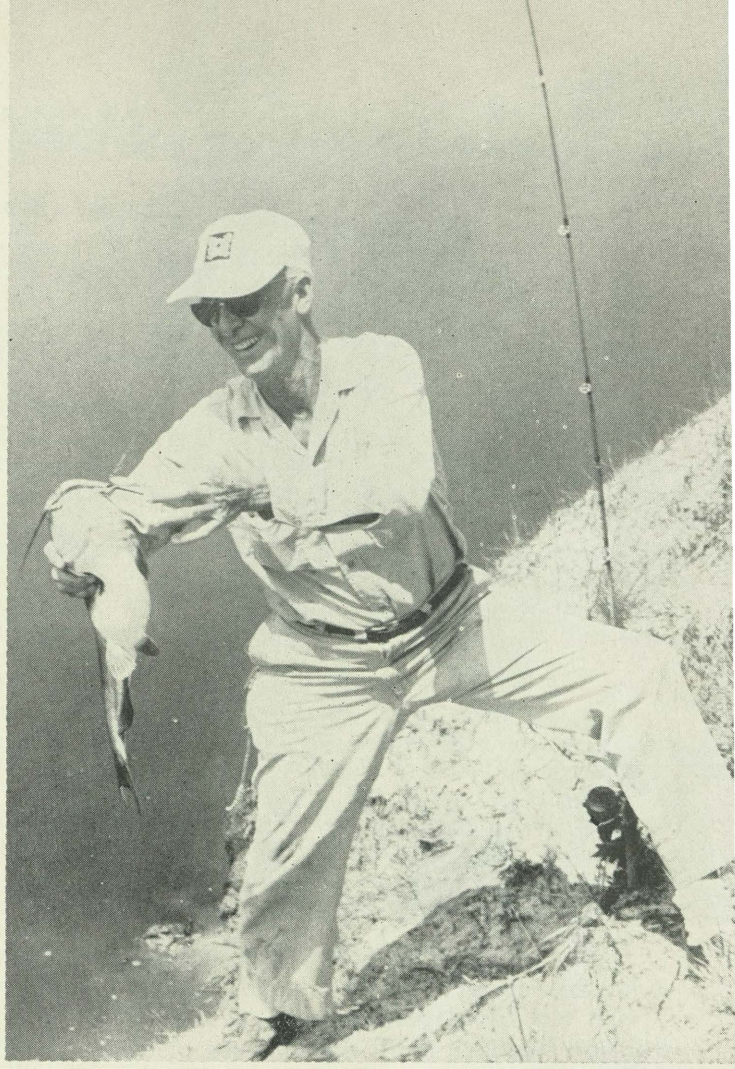
Grumbling, I followed Bill down over the rocks, camera swaying from my neck, spinning rod clutched in one hand, a can of worms in the other. I noticed that Bill was using eight-pound monofilament and clamping on four buckshot above a fine wire No. 6 hook. "I use six-pound mono," I said brightly. "It casts better. And one buckshot is plenty to hold it down."

"Sure. Sure," said Bill. "I used to do the same." He threaded on six or seven red wigglers, one turn of the hook through each worm. He cast what I thought was an unnecessarily large gob of worms out into the center of the pool.

"This way," he said politely, "a small bream or a little cat can peck at it and still leave enough bait for—Uh, oh, he's pickin' it up—" Bill's arm rose with the rod—"he's startin' off— he's got it— wham!" he reared back and set the hook.

The spinning rod arched and line whizzed off at express train speed. "He's gonna jump!" yelled Bill. I dropped my rod, jumped to my feet, and tried to focus my camera in the center of the pool. Away off yonder, 100 yards downstream in the long shallows where the water raced out of the pool, there was a gyrating, sort of St. Vitus dance of a jump in air of a big fish, a resounding whomp and a shower of spray where it hit. I stared stupidly, mouth agape.

Next thing I knew, Bill was off and down the bank,



Bill Abbott lands one.

CATFISH STEW

Skinned out and ready for the ice box.

leaping like a goat, rod held high while he tried to gain line. That catfish was bound for parts unknown. I raced along after him, camera held at the ready. When I caught up with them—Bill and the fish—I shouted: "Let me know when he's ready to jump again."

"They only jump once," Bill gritted through clenched teeth. "Get out of my way! Here he goes again!"

That first channel cat weighed 11 pounds. He did not give up until he was battled down *one-eighth of a mile* below the spillway. The only "action shots" I got of him were after he was well under control, caught and landed, while Bill toted him up the bank and then held him at arms length, gazing proudly. He was a true spotted channel cat, a soft pearl grey along the sides covered with tiny black dots, a graceful fighting fish from his whiskered nose to his forked tail.

As I snapped the shutter, my mouth began to water and my stomach shook hands with itself. That flesh, tender as a baby's skin when you pressed down on it, so smooth, so firm and yet so yielding. . . . Aahh.

"Yep, he'll make a wonderful stew," said Bill practically. "Let's go back and catch another."

"You fish," I said. "I'm going to stand watch on the bank opposite where the first one jumped. The next one will jump in camera distance of me. Folks

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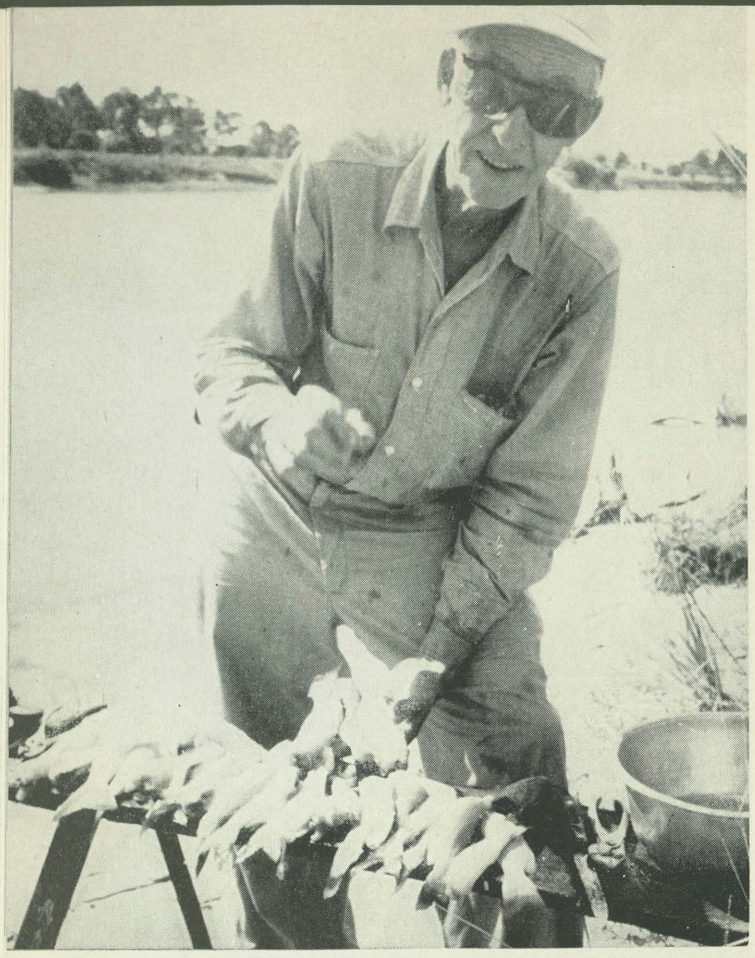

Bill and frying size channel cats.

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will never believe it till they see the picture."

The next one jumped, all right. He bulled right over to the opposite side of the pool, hit shoal water and almost jumped out on the bank. Way out of camera distance. Then he straightened out and went whizzing past me. Bill landed him in half the time the first one took. A seven-pounder.

"I'll outwit them," I said. I walked up to the pool, hiked across the spillway and took up position 100 feet directly opposite Bill. "Make this one jump like you did that last one. Right about here," I pointed at the foam-flecked edge of the pool.

Bill laughed. "Nobody tells these babies where to jump." And he was right. The third big cat he hooked took off like the first one, leaped in the shallow run leading out of the pool 100 yards away—and I was tempted to throw the camera at him. Whether he was bigger than the first one no one will ever know, for he led Bill a quarter of a mile down the racing current before he wound the mono around a clump of willows and broke off.

Right then I quit photographing and started in fishing. I dutifully put on four split buckshot and a huge gob of worms and tossed this tempting offering out alongside Bill's in the center of the pool.

We sat and waited and waited. Nothing happened. "They've wised up," Bill offered. "We might as well go. Wope, I just remembered I've got something special here." He scrabbled around in a minnow bucket and handed me a soft crawdad.

"There are times when channel cats will take anything: a piece of cut bait, even a chunk of cheese or bacon. Then there are times when they want a fancy gob of big, red wiggling worms. Times they'll take a live minnow or even a dead minnow. But when they get specially particular and it looks like they can't be tempted with anything, try a soft, shedder crawdad."

I tried. Thirty seconds later I was hooked on to my first jumping channel cat. He was only a five-pounder, but he jumped like all the others—like a skinned cat on a hot stove. I started bragging about "six-pound mono gives a fellow a lot more fun than that heavy eight-pound stuff." Bill gave me an odd look as he handed me an enticing "gold speck" minnow. "Try this," he said, and under his breath *"on your so-and-so six-pound mono."*

I did. Something mouthed the minnow. It dropped it again. "Got an old mudfish fooling around out there," I said, "or maybe a gar." I felt the bait being gently picked up off the bottom and then the fish started off like Nashua, hit the shoal and leaped. I still don't know what a jumping catfish really looks like. The best description I can give is a big, thick, long white and blue something having an epileptic fit.

It's whamp up—this thing having a fit a couple of feet above the water, mixed in with a shower of spray—and then whamp down again.

Sure would like to see a picture of one, though.

Lost this one. Mighty near as big as Bill's, I guess. Snagged? No. Snapped my six-pound mono on his second long run while I was chasing down the bank after him, trying to regain line.

I've been to Jumpin' Catfish Pool on C-23 a dozen times since, armed with eight-pound mono, and have landed leaping kitties up to 10 pounds. Although I've never seen one jump more than once—and then in shoal water at the end of his first run—almost every one hooked on this particular canal will guarantee you a leap. I've given up trying to take pictures of them in air. They're too fast for me.

This leaping proclivity of these particular catfish is unique in my experience. As I told Bill to begin with, I've caught catfish. In Mississippi, when I was a barefooted kid—and all over Florida. For that matter, you can catch identical appearing channel cats in Bessey Creek itself, it St. Lucie Canal and in the upper North and South Forks of the St. Lucie—with nary a jump or even the threat of a jump. But those are deep waters.

Have any readers of *Florida Wildlife* hooked leaping catfish? If so, I wonder if they weren't under conditions somewhat similar to those which prevail in C-23: fast flowing water with a long, shallow reach. My guess is that the gyrating kitties of C-23 get panicky when they brush bottom in a couple of feet of water and jump because they figure the quickest way away from danger is straight up.

So far as Bill and I are concerned, they're jumping straight into a Dutch oven. Here's our recipe for Great Jumping Catfish Stew which we used on that 11-pounder.

Skin your cat and fillet him, being careful to leave on all the belly and throat meat (it's the very sweetest). Unlike bass, you don't have to eat it fresh-caught to get the utmost in flavor. In fact, it helps the catfish to age for two or three days in the ice box.

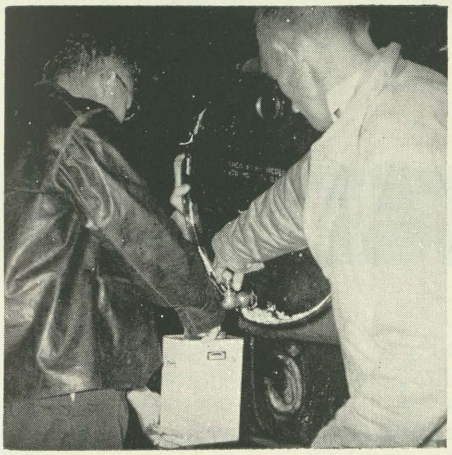
On the Afternoon of the Stew (capitals intentional, as befits an august occasion) cut the fillets up into chunks about two inches square. Take half to three-quarters of a pound of salt pork, good old fat-back or sow bosom, and cut it into quarter-inch cubes. Slow-fry the cubes until they are golden brown. Take

(Continued on Page 41)

SELECTIVE POISONING AT TRAFFORD

LAKE TRAFFORD near Immokalee in Collier County was once a locally-famed bass fishing lake. Limit strings of scrappy largemouths were so common that they hardly elicited comment from local rod and reelers. As happens, however, the once near-fabulous angling on the popular south Florida lake slid almost imperceptibly into a decline until scarcely a bass could be coaxed from the waters. At the same time the crappie population seemed to be faring well and soon the lake was enjoying a reputation as something of a hotspot for these popular cane pole and light tackle favorites. Sporty as they are, to many anglers crappies are a poor substitute for the plug hitting, tackle testing bass.

The changed conditions, whatever their nature, seemed to favor other less desirable fishes and soon the waters of the lake were crowded with various rough fishes, especially gizzard shad.



In the pre-dawn darkness, Fisheries Technicians Mel Huish (left) and Harold Moody measure out a quantity of rotenone used in the poisoning operation.

The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's Fish Management Division had a haul seine crew working Trafford in an attempt to reduce the imbalance with the object of restoring the waters to something of their former status as a sport fishing lake. In June 1954, at the start of the haul seining operation, Trafford's fish population stacked up something like this; 79% rough fish (71% of which were gizzard shad), 12% crappie, 6% bluegill, and a smattering of other fishes including a mere 1/10 of 1% bass.

In nine months of haul seining, 184,776 pounds of rough fish were eliminated. During this period 46,577 pounds of game fish taken in the seines were turned back into the lake. Some 15,000 bass fingerlings were released in Trafford upon completion of the seining activities.

By the end of the nine months of seine operation, the percentage of rough fish had been cut down only 6%, which means that rough fish still made up a whopping 73% of the lake's fish population.

Encouraged by the results of selective poisoning experiments on smaller bodies of water in other parts of the state, the Fish Management Division decided to attempt a selective poisoning operation on Lake Trafford.

For some years, rotenone, a derivative of the root of a tropical shrub, *Lonchocarpus*, has been used as a fish poison. Experience has shown that some species of fish are more subject to the toxic effects of the poison than are others. Further testing indicated the possibility of selectively poisoning rough fishes, and especially gizzard shad by the application of rotenone in concentrations which would kill the rough fish without harming to any appreciable degree the game fish population.

It is necessary in an operation of this kind, to calculate within a small percentage of error the actual water volume of the lake to be treated in order to control the concentration of the toxic material. Where a body of water the size of Lake Trafford is concerned, calculations within the small allowable margin of error are obviously difficult. Too heavy an application of poison would result in heavy kill of game fish, too light a concentration would result in no rough fish kill and a waste of the relatively expensive poison. By a series of calculations made by various methods, it was determined that, at the time of the operation, Lake Trafford covered 1,400 acres.

On November 9, 1955, 348 gallons of 5% emulsified rotenone and 15 gallons of a more concentrated rotenone solution (Pro Nox-Fish) were applied to the lake. Weather conditions prevented completion of the operation with the Commission's spray plane, therefore airboats used in water hyacinth control spraying operations were pressed into service to apply the poison.

The bulk of the weight of shad present in Lake Trafford at that time was composed of fish greater than 12 inches in length. Past experience had demonstrated that the concentrations of rotenone required to kill these larger shad was close to what proves lethal to largemouth

(Continued on Page 40)

Fisheries Technician Pete Crittenden (left) and Bill Geiger of the Hyacinth Control division fill the spray tank of one of the air boats used in spreading the poison.

SEND YOU

CAN YOU PICTURE a big-league ball player passing up spring training and when the season opens, strolling up to the plate, taking three healthy swings, then wondering why he didn't get a hit?

That is admittedly a little far-fetched, but it illustrates the attitude of most bait casters toward the techniques of handling their rods and reels. When they're out in a boat, sitting opposite a promising clump of lily pads or hyacinths, they wonder why their casts aren't as smooth and accurate as those made by other casters.

But, more important, they wonder why their reels blossom forth with those big, luxuriant backlashes—and with such regularity.

Ignorance is the reason. Oh, don't misunderstand. Maybe the guy handling the rod has a Ph.D. or something of the sort. It's his thumb that's ignorant, because he hasn't taken the time to teach that digit its correct function in the scheme of things.

It's funny, too. If he *had* taken the time necessary to educate that ignorant thumb, he'd became a proficient caster in one summer—whereas it takes eight or ten years the way he usually goes about it.

Backlashes can't always be blamed on the thumb, of course, but what holds true about handling other kinds of equipment, holds equally true with using your casting rod. No matter how perfect your equipment, what you accomplish will be limited by the skill with which you handle it.

That fact being so obvious, you'd think most fishermen probably spend some spare time in the back yard, practicing. But, then, you'd have another think coming. For fishermen, as a class, spend less time perfecting their technique than any other class of sportsmen—and then expect more out of it.

But, assuming proper equipment (which we'll talk about in a moment), it's the caster's thumb that's by and large the determining factor behind all those backlashes, and behind the fact that he can't put his plugs and spinners where he wants them—where they'll be most effective.

Getting back to our ball player, he knows his paycheck depends on his performance, so instead of passing up spring practice, he'll be at the training camp days ahead of schedule in order to get in some extra conditioning. He runs and throws and bats as much as possible so that when he calls on his muscles to make a particular play or swat a game-winning hit, those muscles respond like they're expected to *because he's practiced that particular action hundreds of times.*

There's no comparison between the complexities of making baseball plays and the relatively more simple act of proper casting. But there is this similarity. Both call for the reflexive use of muscles, and the only way you can develop reflexes is by practice.

Now, you can go about this thing in one of two ways. You can wait to do your casting until you're out in a boat and the chips are down, so to speak. Or you can take a few 30-minute sessions with a practice plug in the relative privacy of your back yard, when you're relaxed and can figure out what you're doing wrong.

In effect, give your thumb a little education—some *spring training.* Give it practice controlling the speed on that ever-diminishing spool as the line races out through the rod guides. Let it learn for itself when to increase pressure on the spool and the precise moment when it must stop the movement altogether. These are things the thumb must learn to do automatically, without any conscious thought on your part. For when you're casting under actual fishing conditions you haven't time to think about the fundamentals of your sport any more than a batter has

time to think about swinging levelly and keeping his eyes on the ball and taking just so much of a step in just the right direction. That must all have been practiced so it is done through well-conditioned reflexes.

Of course, educating your thumb isn't all there is to eliminating backlashes, any more than eliminating backlashes is all there is to proficient casting. But think about it this way: You'll never learn to be a proficient bait caster until you *do* learn to eliminate backlashes, and you'll never learn to eliminate backlashes until you *do* educate your thumb.

However, there are more factors to be considered in connection with backlashes than proper thumb control. Your equipment must be right if your thumb is to be given half a chance.

Take the rod, for instance. The 5 or 5½ foot length is about average for most bait casting, though they are available from 4 to 6½ feet. But for general use, the former are probably preferred by more fishermen than any others.

The reason is fairly obvious. The leverage inherent in rods of these lengths, coupled with the proper tip action, will best handle the plugs of the weights generally preferred; ⅜, ½, and ⅝-ounce.

If you use lighter plugs, than for maximal results you need the added leverage found in rods of 6 or 6½ feet.

But leverage doesn't tell it all. The responsiveness of the rod tip, or *action,* means a lot. A "light" action tip on your rod may feel just right, and its responsiveness may be just what you need to cast well with the plugs you are using. But you may find that, should you want to use lighter plugs (¼ or ⅜-ounce, for instance), the rod tip doesn't respond flexibly enough to give you good casts. In this case it'll be necessary to use an even lighter action tip.

Just as rods can be obtained in a variety of lengths, so there are four general types of action available—light, extra light, medium, and heavy. Correlating rod lengths with the different tip actions puts a variety of possible combinations at the disposal of the bait caster. But a 5 or 5½ foot rod with "medium" action will be found most serviceable as long as you stick to ⅜-ounce lures and heavier. It is only when you switch to lighter lures that you need give any serious thought to changing your rod lengths and tips.

Lots of bait casters "over-line" their reels in the mistaken notion that they'll have a better chance of "landing the bigger ones." You don't need 20-pound line on your reel all the time, and you'll find that, in most instances, you'll land the big ones on 10 or 15-pound line just as well. You'll also find lighter lines easier to control, and you'll get greater distance and more accuracy with your casts.

Another thought in passing, particularly for the less experienced bait caster, is that it's foolish to handicap yourself needlessly with heavy line which will actually interfere with proper thumb control. Give that thumb a chance!

Your reel makes a big difference in the length and accuracy of your casts, and your ability to control backlashes. There are at least three important things to consider in a reel. First, it must be able to start turning easily and have a light spool. Secondly, there should be no vibration to interfere with its smooth turning. And finally, the handles must be well balanced and light.

In order to start easily, the spool must be light and there should be just a suggestion of play in the bearings at either end. And though it may be hard to convince the inexperienced caster who cannot *feel* the difference, a reel can be *too* light. If you're not sure, ask a more experienced caster to help you pick out the proper reel for your use.

If the reel doesn't run smoothly, there may be a number of contributory causes—worn or sloppy gears, a bent spool shaft—or just plain absence of a light lubricating oil.

Heavy handles contribute strongly to backlashes because they act like counter-weights, tending to keep the reel spinning even when the thumb tries to slow it down or stop it entirely. Check now and then to make sure the handles are exactly at right angles to the reel headplate, or else there'll be a strong vibration when the spool turns at high speed.

It seems apropos at this point to interject a word or two about "anti-backlash" devices. The only reason manufacturers put them on reels is for the benefit of the rankest beginners—by restricting the action of the spool, it tends to restrict "over-run" which causes the majority of backlashes. For the caster who is a step or two above the beginner class, an educated thumb takes the place of the mechanical device. To use one as a matter of habit is to hold down the distance of individual casts, and force yourself to compensate for it by "pressing," thereby sacrificing accuracy. The best word of advice for the caster is "don't."

Now that you have chosen the proper equipment for the casting you plan to do, and have decided to do a little private back-yard "spring training" for your thumb, pick out a practice plug weighing about the same as the plugs you plan to use. They are available in ¼, ⅜, ½, and ⅝-ounce sizes. The author has a preference for the ⅜-ounce as most practical for this purpose.

Just one more word of advice concerning your thumb. Its I. Q. is fairly high and it'll learn quickly. So if you're thinking of chucking the whole business because you envision a course of training comparable to preparation for a heavyweight championship fight—if you're worried about that, forget it.

Two or three half-hour sessions will get you in fighting trim for those Florida largemouths, while a couple such sessions a week for a few months will make your fellow casters nudge one another and exclaim, "Boy, there must be *years* of practice in *those* casts!"

When you hear that, just look at your thumb—and wink!

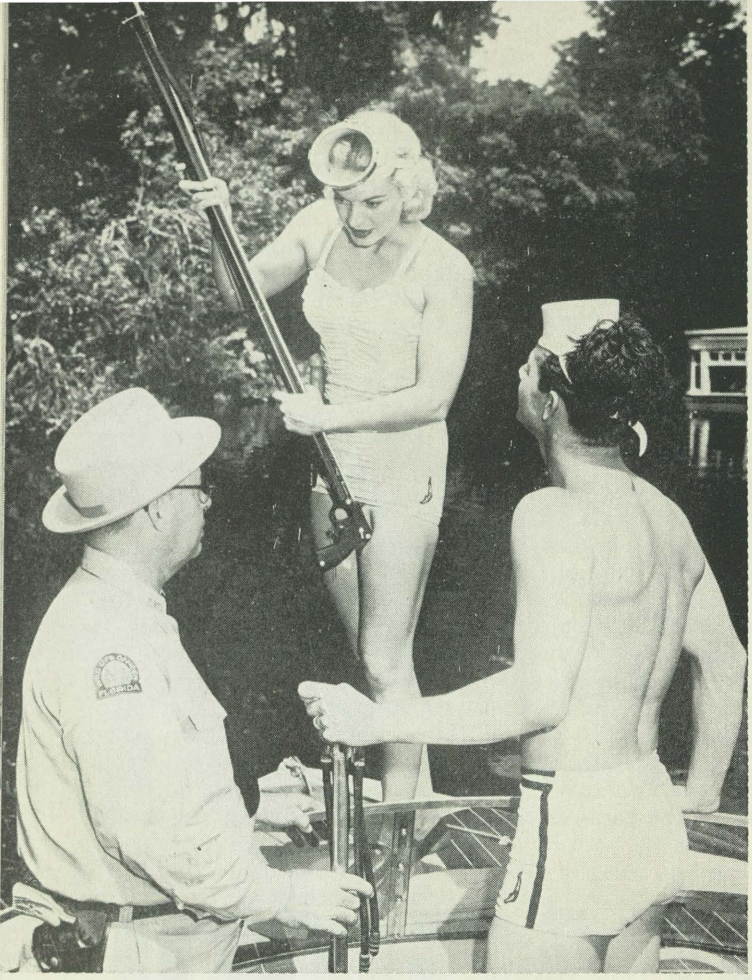
END

R THUMB TO SCHOOL

By
JULIUS STURM

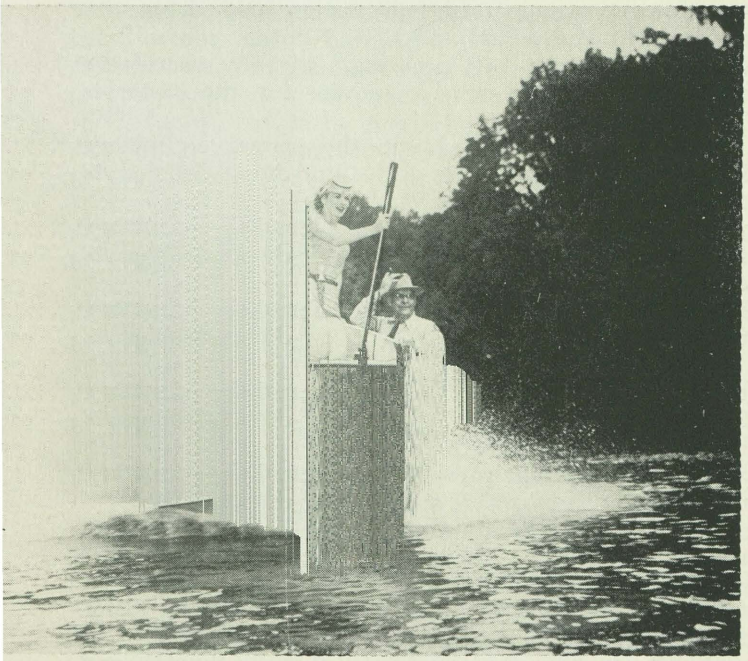
UNDERWATER GAR HUNT

PHOTOS BY BRUCE MOZERT



Silver Springs model and swimmer Ginger Stanley explains the operation of the spear gun to Wildlife Officer W. H. Wiggins as Ricou Browning stands by impatient for the hunt to begin.

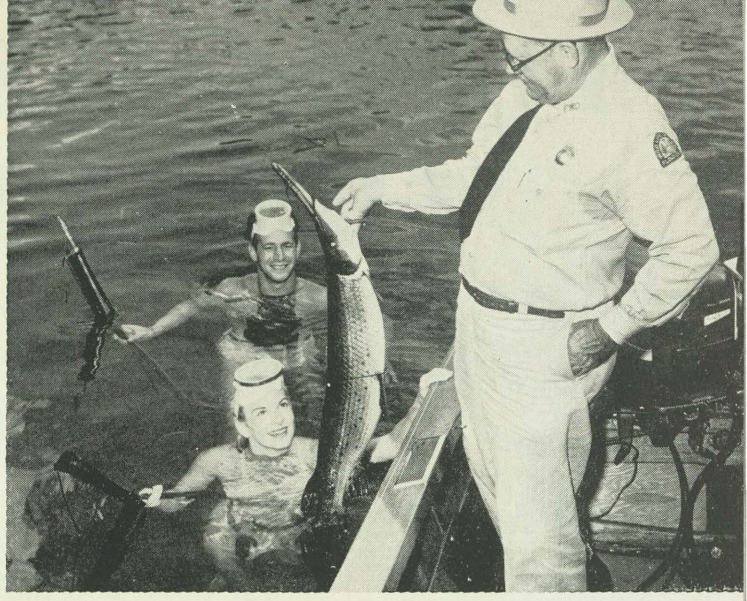
There they are! The gar hunters spot a concentration of the well-armored long-noses sporting about the crystal clear depths near the confluence of the Silver River with the Ocklawaha.



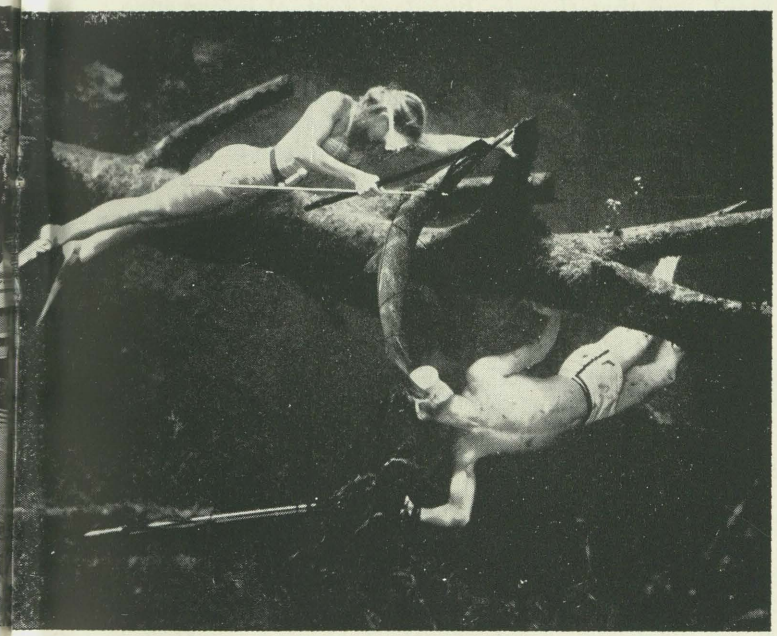
They're off in a swirl of spray. The gar hunting party heads down the winding course of the beautiful Silver River.

Ginger and Ricou don their face masks and slip carefully over the side to begin their underwater stalk. As Ginger approaches a sunken log, a garfish glides out of the shadows. A carefully aimed shot scores a direct hit.

Although spearfishing in the fresh waters of the state is prohibited by law, special permits may be issued by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission for organized gar hunts conducted under the direct supervision of a Wildlife Officer.

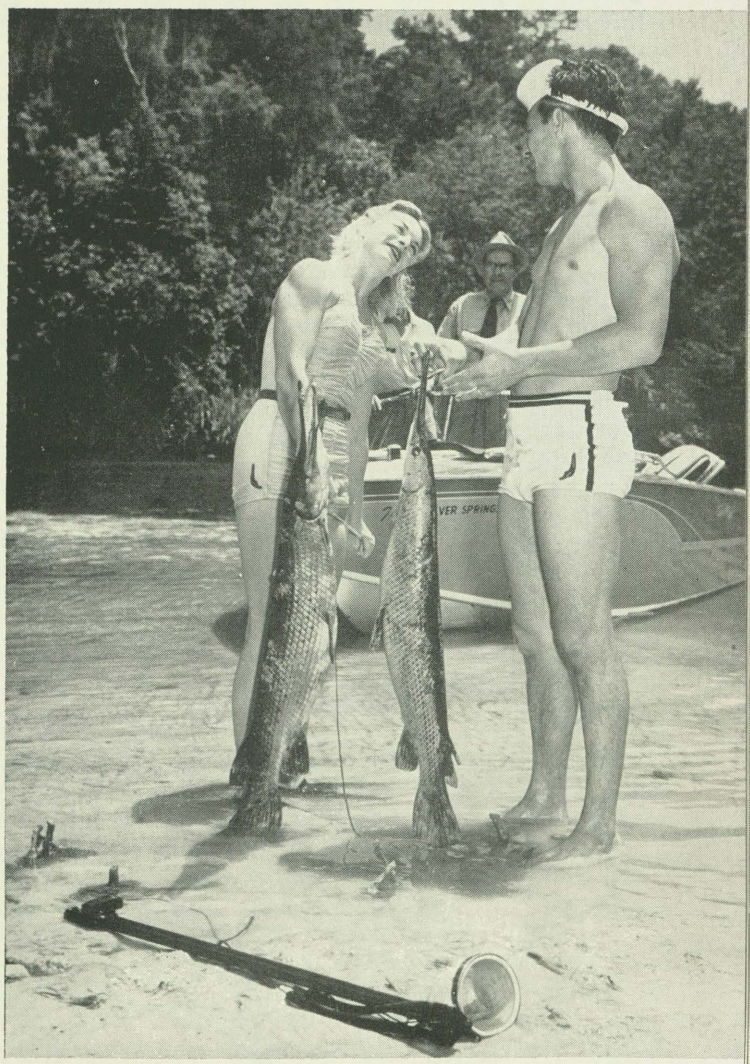


Wildlife Officer Wiggins hefts one of the gar and agrees that this underwater gar hunting may have some interesting possibilities.



A few minutes later the two swimmers corner another gar under a sunken tree trunk and Ginger scores again.

Ginger and Ricou pause on the river bottom to examine the catch.



At the end of the hunt, Ginger and Ricou compare notes. They may argue who speared the largest fish but both agree that an underwater gar hunt is real sport.

FISH CONSERVATION FUNDAMENTALS

By R. W. ESCHMEYER

CONCLUSION: THE SPORTSMAN'S ROLE

IN THE EARLY DAYS, sportsmen were responsible for the beginnings of modern fish conservation. Their early squabbling led to the hiring of biologists to serve as trouble-shooters. This hiring, in some states, led to the change, from indiscriminate stocking and arbitrarily-made regulations, to a more effective fish conservation program.

Today, as in the early days, our progress will be determined mainly by the actions of sportsmen. We can have good fishing only if the anglers, themselves, insist on an up-to-date program; and, only if they, collectively, take a hand in the many aspects of fish conservation which cannot be handled by the fishery authorities alone.

Organization

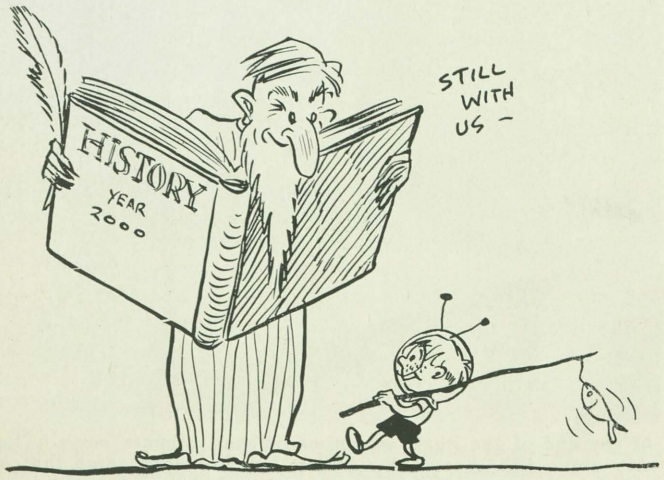
Individuals carry little weight in an age when group action determines what shall be done. Individual sportsmen can be of only limited help to a fish conservation program; organized sportsmen, working together, can carry enough weight to decidedly influence our fishing future.

We have organized sportsmen's groups in our least progressive states, as well as in those which lead the fish conservation parade. So, the mere fact that a sportsmen's organization exists in a state is of little importance. The strength of that organization, and the ability, progressiveness, and caliber of its leaders are the important items.

Sportsmen's Activities

Here are a dozen specific suggestions for sportsmen's groups:

1. The organized sportsmen should insist that the state have a modern fish (and game) program, handled by well-paid, competent personnel, free from politics.



2. Sportsmen should insist that the regulations be made by the fish and game (or conservation) department, and that they be based on factual information. If made by the legislature, sportsmen should see to it that only the proper laws are enacted.

3. The pollution problem can be solved by an enlightened public opinion. It's too big a program for the fish and game authorities to handle, but pressure from sportsmen's organizations can go far toward forcing pollution abatement.

4. The cluttering of our waters and shorelines with cans, bottles, and other debris is leading to an increase in "keep out" signs. The remedy to this problem must come chiefly from the sportsmen themselves, through educational programs.

5. In many instances the quality of our fishing depends on land use in watershed—on the farming, forestry practices, etc. In some instances, such as preventing silting of fishing waters as a result of improper road building, the sportsmen can be extremely helpful by putting pressure on the road builders to correct the bad practices. In some other aspects of land use, especially on private land, improvement must come through education.

6. Some city water supply reservoirs are open to fishing, others aren't. There is no excuse for not permitting fishing on such waters, provided certain sanitary regulations are enforced. It's another problem for the organized sportsmen.

7. Each sportsmen's organization needs an active and capable education committee. It can be expected to do an effective job in helping out on both adult and juvenile conservation education.

8. Many bills introduced in Congress, if passed, may vitally affect our future fishing—some beneficially, others adversely. Passage of the bills depends to a considerable degree on the expressed views of constituents. Sportsmen can have a decided influence on national legislation as it affects national forests, national parks, and other public domain. State legislation can also greatly influence our fishing. Sportsmen must play an active part in passing of desirable state and national legislation, and in the defeat of proposals which would harm our favorite form of recreation.

9. Sportsmen must play a vital role in having proper recognition given to fishing values in the building of dams for hydropower, flood control, or irrigation.

10. In areas where fishing waters are scarce, organized sportsmen can take the initiative in the building of fishing lakes, for club use or for public use. In some areas, this is an important club activity.

11. Each sportsmen's group should have an active "junior" program. This might include sponsoring

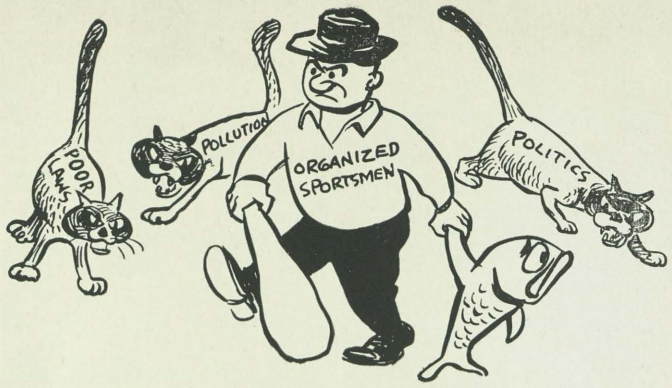
kids for conservation camps, building kid fishing lakes, casting instruction, providing suitable literature for youngsters, and a wide variety of other activities.

12. Assuring public access to existing waters is a big and growing problem. Organized sportsmen can influence it immensely.

A REMINDER

This concludes the brief discussion og "Fish Conservation Fundamentals." We remind the reader that coverage of the subject is far from complete. Too, there are many exceptions to the statements made. There is no assurance that the discussion is free from personal bias on the part of the author. This is simply an attempt to "put the pieces together" in a brief discussion of a broad and complicated field.

Fish conservation is undergoing constant change. Most of these changes seem to be in the right direction. We are faced with many problems, but our own view-point, nevertheless, is an optimistic one. There are, now, many instances to show where modern fish conservation is helping our angling. We are extremely



well impressed with the fine job which most of the state fishery organizations are doing, despite numerous obstacles.

If the present progress continues, we have every reason to believe that fishing will still be America's most popular form of outdoor recreation long after the present generations of fish have terminated in the frying pan or died of an old age! END.

ROUGH FISH REMEDY?

Reprinted from THE FISHERMAN Magazine

IF YOU CAN'T beat them, join them. Maybe we could twist the words a little and come out with an idea for rough fish control. Something like, "if you can't beat them, eat them."

Through the years, fish and fowl, man and beast, have been stamped with stigmas that persist for no logical reason whatsoever. Consider the toads that "cause warts," the coachwhip snake that can "whip a man to death," and the "blood-sucking" tendencies of the common bat, to name only a few of the more popular but unfounded beliefs.

And the fish kingdom has not escaped. Most notably are certain fish discriminated against when it comes to edibility. "Ain't fit-to-eat" apostles, when asked if they have ever tried a particular fish, usually say "Why, no. But everybody says . . ."

Although there was nothing sensational about it (similar experiments have been done before), a quiet little experiment conducted by a fisheries biologist (Clay Wilson of Chickasaw, Oklahoma) supports our appeal. At a fish fry for the forty members of his naval reserve unit, Wilson served eight kinds of fish, including crappies, white bass, black bass, channel catfish, flathead catfish, river carpsuckers, carp, and fresh-water drum. Each guest was served one portion of drum plus two other, and different, portions of fish, all three unidentified. After the meal when the cigars were being passed out, Wilson surveyed the group asking which serving of fish tasted the best. Even though the group had been exposed to eight different fish, ninety-five per cent picked the drum as the tastiest—even though this fish is generally regarded as a rough fish, flavorless and soft-fleshed.

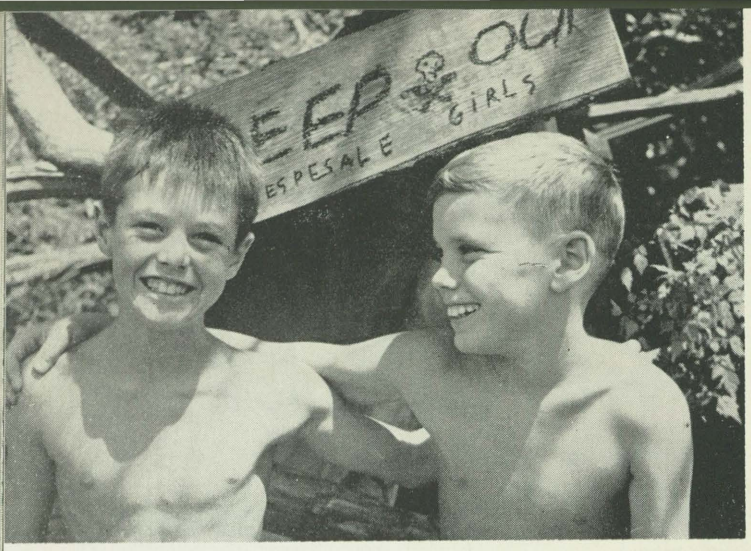
In a previous experiment, Wilson had fed channel catfish and garfish to a group. The catfish, taken from a clear, swift-moving stream, took second place to the gar, a fish the majority of us would not consider eating.

While we are not suggesting that everyone will like fillets of garfish, carp, and other rough fish, we would suggest that the eating of such fish be faced with an open mind, untainted by the stigmas of time and convention.

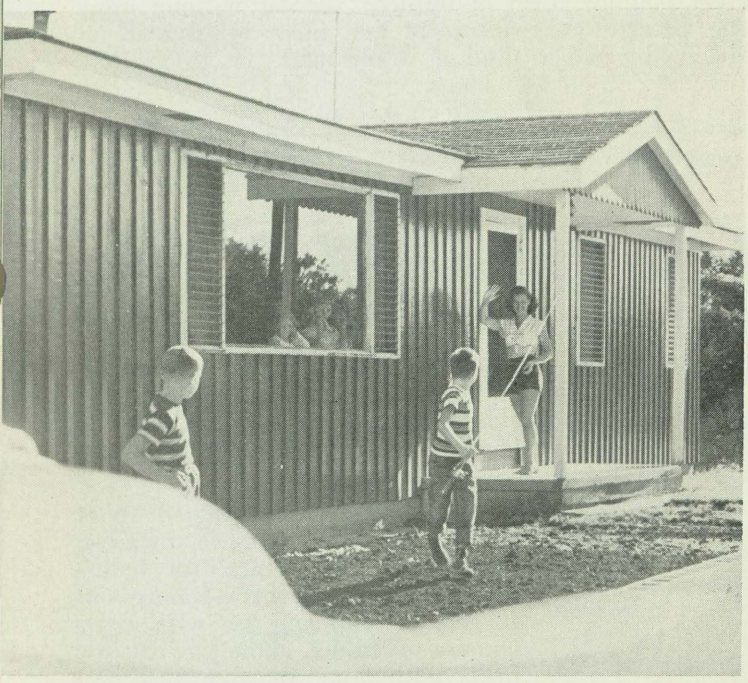
What a boon to rough fish control if gar, bowfin, and drum were sought for their eating qualities! Basically there is no physiological reason why such fish should not be edible. For example, carp are primarily vegetarians, bowfins are predators, and drums subsist on small fish, snails, and worms. As compared to the classic example of the food habits of the popular favorite, the chicken, these fish are gourmets.

A northern pike is judged about average when it comes to tastiness, but pity the innocence (or ignorance) of an incident we once observed. A man and his wife, newcomers to fishing, came back to the dock with four or five medium-sized northern pike. When the lady asked the sun-wrinkled dock attendant what kind of fish they were, he volunteered: "Them's snakes, ma'am," a local label applied to the northern pike because it is "long and wiggly." Horrified, the wife refused to have anything more to do with the catch—and even friend husband, affected by the terminology, looked pale around the gills. If the dock attendant had said "rosefish," (or better yet, "northern pike") how different their reaction would have been.

Forget dogmas, old wives' tales, and superstitions. Go fry up a carp. Then if you don't like it, well, that's that. But remember the proof of the pudding is in the eating, not in well-meant, but entirely inaccurate, advice, nicknames, or reputations that have been handed down through the years. END.



Malcolm (right) and Mike.



Younger sisters gaze wistfully out of window as Mike waves good-bye to Mother. Home ties were never weaker.

Except for the motor, the larger items are cooperatively placed in the boat according to plan.

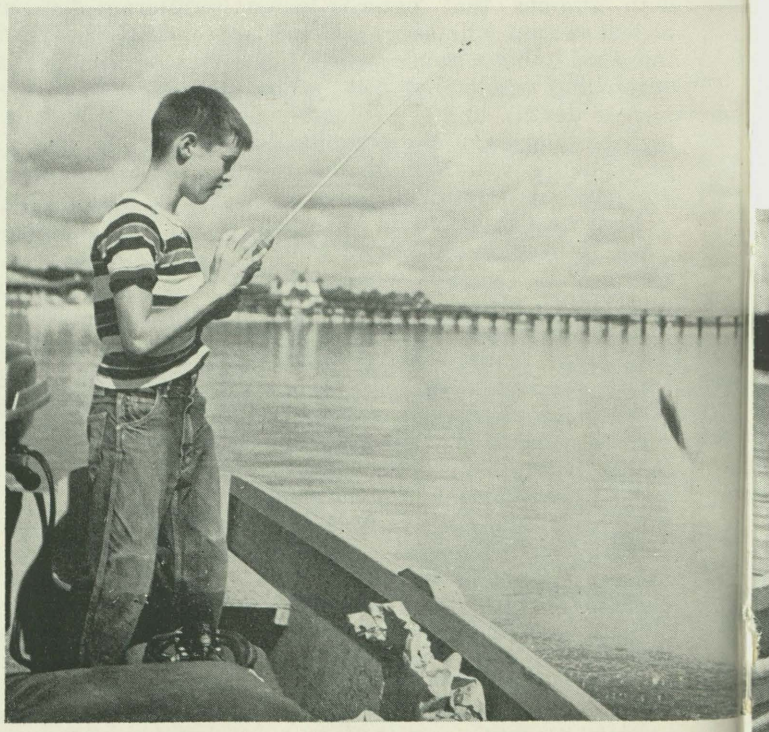
DON'T TAKE A

By MALCOLM C. JOHNSON

MALCOLM AND MIKE. Friends, colleagues, accomplices. Both boys have two younger sisters but no brothers and are quick to admit that this is something less than satisfactory. The boys would like to be real brothers but can only claim to be God-brothers and blood-brothers. The first because I, "Big Malcolm" am Mike's God-father; the second binding and everlasting relationship was established by bleeding into each other's wounds (really scratches) made with an unbelievably dull 35-cent knife. Malcolm is a veteran of many fishing trips; Mike almost a complete neophyte.

As a reward for something or other, probably just being little boys, a joint fishing trip was promised and planned and postponed and promised and planned and so on until at last the day of fulfillment was at hand. Arrangements were made to pick Mike up at 9:00 o'clock; by 7:00 he had become so impatient that he had telephoned twice to be sure there would be no delay. By 9:15 he was engrossed in a comic and Malcolm was out of the car and part way to the door before he realized we were there. He almost beat Malcolm back to the car from a sitting start.

On the way to the boat the boys manfully decided that since it was their trip they should do all of the work. Besides, they felt that they needed the supervised practice in preparation for the day when they were big enough that "nobody didn't need to take us fishing." As it turned out, they learned how to *go* fishing but not to return. The unpleasant fact that boats once loaded must be unloaded, cars reloaded,

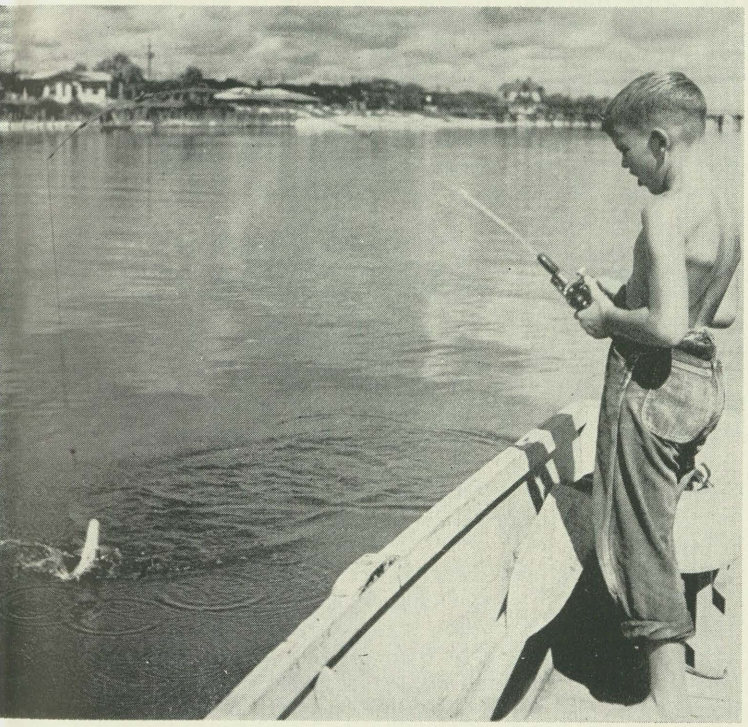


Mike lands his first fish taken on rod and reel and his second ever.

BOY FISHING

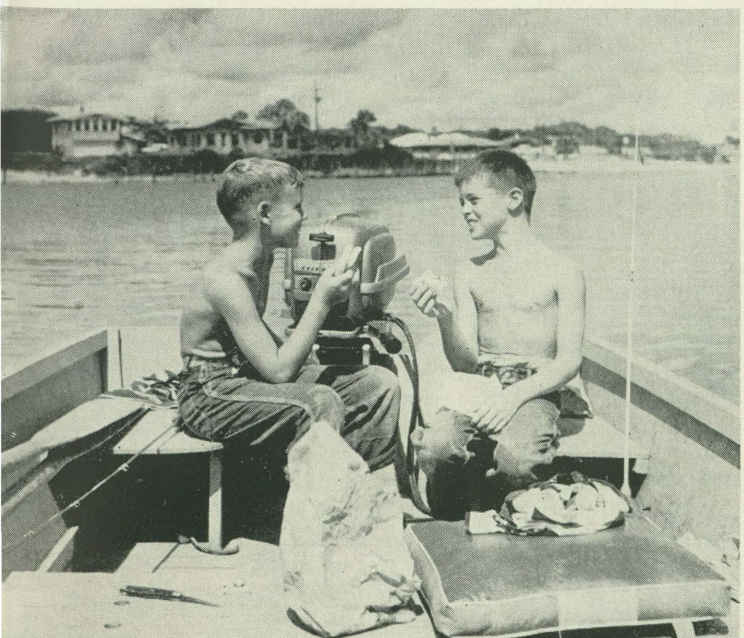
and tackle washed and oiled is as much a mystery to them now as it ever was. Cleaning fish? As far as I can make out from the amount of assistance they gave me, it isn't even necessary. At eating them they do real good.

Well, it's over now and I've thought it all out. After considering what it costs in time, temper, and trouble, my advice would be simply this, "Never take a boy fishing—take two." END.



Though really pleased, Malcolm feigns disgust at the size of a croaker that has just given him quite a tussle on limber rod.

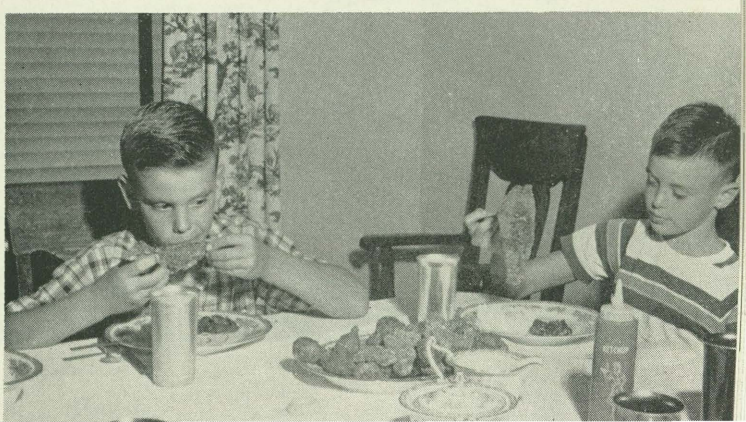
Between bites of lunchmeat and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, each boy brags about the superior number, kind, and size of fish he will catch when he resumes fishing.



Actually more time after lunch is consumed in play than in fishing. Here the boys unsuccessfully grab at tiny minnows schooling at the surface. During the next hour a blackfish, a pinfish, and a croaker are netted in spite of the horseplay.

Surprised and genuinely proud mother praises catch of tired and equally proud boys.

Best fish we ever ate. Say, wonder who cleaned these things anyway.



WHY A TVA

"GEE, I'M SORRY STEVE. Sure would like to go with you tomorrow. Just can't get away."

I dialed another number, "Good to hear from you again, Boy (enthusiasm). No, I won't be able to get away tomorrow. If you will be around a couple weeks, I will try to get off (no enthusiasm).

So it went. These were the last two of several numbers. None of my old friends wanted to go fishing with me. Oh, blazes, can't say I blame them. Sweat trickled through an eyebrow into my left eye. Too blasted hot. After driving 800 miles from Tennessee to Florida I was to fish alone.

I got out of the telephone booth, mopped the sweat with a wringing handkerchief, walked to the bar and ordered a big schooner of draft beer, then moved to another stool to get the questionable benefit of a noisy floor fan.

The fan pushed gusts of hot air over me and I studied the antics of a house fly. This one was a bar fly. He made three attempts to land on a bowl of pretzels. Each time the gale from the fan carried him beyond his goal.

Turning attention to the bartender, I looked him over, trying to figure out whether he might be a fisherman. I was the lone customer and he had served me without a word. He certainly was no talker, unusual. There was a fishing scene, put out by a brewery, back of the bar. Maybe this silent barkeep fished after all.

"Been doing any fishing?" I asked.

My question had not carried above the roar of the fan. The barman, maybe misunderstanding, drew another suds and set it in front of me. Oh well, I could use another. I waited as he served a package customer. In the meantime, my friend, Mr. Fly, had worked out a system. He let the blast from the fan carry him beyond the pretzels, then walked back to the bowl using it as a protective windbreak. Florida flys must be smarter than Tennessee flys.

Catching the bartender's eye, I pointed to the fishing picture. He walked over, mild irritation showing in his face.

"Been fishing lately?"

"Nope, never touch the stuff."

"Howcome, with all the good fishing around here?"

He spoke in a flat disinterested monotone, "Don't like 'em. Cut bait on a party boat once. Seven days a week. Smell makes me sick, fish make me sick, water makes me sick, fumes make me sick and boats make me sick."

I was about to expound the merits of the greatest outdoor sport but thought better of it. This man was obviously a twisted crank of some sort or he had solid ulcers for stomach walls. I drained the schooner to my friend, the fly, who was gleefully gorging himself on pretzels. He was at least cheerful, stopping occasionally to rub his hands together with genuine pleasure.

My morale climbed as I drove toward a downtown tackle store. Orlando is a most attractive Florida city. It's forty lakes made an orderly street plan impossible. Although I had once lived here for two years and visit annually for fishing, I frequently be-

FISHERMAN COMES TO FLORIDA

By VALDANE STEPHENS

come momentarily lost along its oak-shaded, lake-skirting streets.

In the tackle store, the man did not remember me from previous visits. Too many transient customers, I guess. He was friendly and helpful. "Fishing has slowed in the lakes. You might try popping bugs on the St. Johns. Two fellows really slayed the black bass up at Lemon Bluff near Sanford earlier this week. I had a report, too, that the bass are eatin' up the popping bugs in the Lake Poinsett area near Cocoa." He went on to say that bream, shellcracker and crappie were inactive.

After this helpful advice, I felt obligated to spend a little money with him so picked up a half dozen bass bugs of local manufacture which he recommended. Black and white were the big producers at the moment, according to him. These were white bodied with black and white hackle. Two downy white feathers flanked the hook. The body was the size of the cork tip on tipped cigarettes. The barb on the hook was curved out instead of in as is the case with snelled hooks. They looked good. We would see.

It wasn't until later that evening at the motel, while studying a map of the locale, that I decided upon a place to fish the next day. Following the course of the St. Johns, I came to the point where the Cheney Highway, Florida 50, crosses the river. This brought to mind Marjorie Kennan Rawling's absorbing book, *Cross Creek,* which I had recently read. I remembered well the chapter describing the trip she and friend, Dessie, made by outboard from the vicinity of Old Fort Christmas down the St. Johns. "Down" is north in this instance, since the St. Johns flows north its entire length. I would drive east on Cheney Highway to one of the fishing camps on the river at the highway.

The idea appealed to me for another reason. The Seminole Chief, Osceola, had encamped near Christmas, Florida, during the latter days of the Seminole Indian War. Perhaps he had fished the same stretch of water.

Ted Trueblood wrote an interesting outdoor piece recently in which he told of the enhanced interest resulting from learning as much as possible about the natural and geological aspects of the locale in which we fish. To me the principle applies even more to some knowledge of the historical background of the waters we angle on. Certainly the St. Johns played a rich and thrilling role in the development of Florida. If you fish Florida and have an interest in her fascinating history I recommend membership in the *Florida Historical Society.* The address is Gainesville, Florida, the fee four dollars a year. The quarterly publication is well worth the reading time and the modest cost.

The next morning I brewed a pot of coffee on the hot plate, filled a thermos, and by daybreak had driven the 28 or so miles to the Idle Hour Camp on Highway 50.

I loaded into a boat, clamped on the motor and eased out to the main channel. The August sun balanced on the horizon and promised to give forth with a scorcher. The spell of the early morning river seized me. All fishermen should occasionally fish alone. Man is never so close to the Almighty and His handiwork as when he is away from his own kind on just such an occasion as this. I looked into my outboard wake. The water had a golden copper tone. Why was I depressed yesterday when no one would fish with me? I had company aplenty. Mr. River was there, warm and welcoming. Mr. Peace and Mr. Contentment got aboard around the bend and I knew then I was in for one helluva good day, fish or no fish.

The river is narrow and fast flowing here. It spills out into grassy lakes and shallow hyacinth-choked sloughs. The country is flat and deserted. Scrub pine, palmetto and level cattle country spread to the horizon. I studied the shoreline. In places the river was level with the pasture land. In others myrtle, palm and weeds hung out from sloping banks. Sure looked good for bugs.

A mile from the dock I cut the motor, jointed my glass rod and tied one of the black and white bugs on a six pound leader. The current carried me along as I worked the bug out to the shady bank. At many reaches, it was possible to work both banks while drifting midstream.

After offering my bug for an hour, I decided the fellow's statement at the tackle shop, "the bass are eatin' up popping bugs," must have been motivated by membership in the Chamber of Commerce. The water really did look good however, so I cranked the five horse motor and retraced my route. The sun was riding higher now. A granddaddy bull snake, awkward in the water, challenged the right of way. He was creating a wake of proportions similar to mine. I agreed with him that his license to travel this route was probably of longer standing than the authority vested in the state agent who had issued mine the day before. I gave him a wide berth even though he was basically a land critter and in my opinion should have realized it and stayed on dry land. He may have entertained the same thought about me.

Killing the motor I settled back for another try. This Orlando bass bug I liked. Not large enough to catch the wind, but of size to tempt a hungry bass. I worked the lure to the shoreline permitting him to lie quietly for as long as the current would allow. My next cast, the bug bit into the silver wood of an aged and dead cyprus. The tree was majestic and unashamed in its nakedness. A few gentle jiggles of the rod tip and the bait fell at the base of the tree with a soft splash. I swear the water did not boil. There was no explosion. The water just plain humped up a little with my popper riding the crest. The bug sank into the hump and my reflexes, dulled by an hour's casting with no strike, were delayed. The whole thing was like a slow motion movie. Hauling back with a vicious strike, as if to compensate for inept slowness, my rod tip stayed in about the same posi-

(Continued on Page 47)

The Compleat Scientifik Angler

By EVERETT (Po'kchops) WILLIAMS

(Tamper Bay Itchyologist)

ALTHOUGH THE EVENTS to be related hereafter are of an uncommonly revolting nature, I want to urge both of my readers to be of good cheer. Into each life some rain must fall; every cloud has a silver lining; and it is always darkest just before the dawn.

I have every confidence that the dawn, when it does come, will be as red as a fox's mouth in huckleberry time.

Many years ago when I first came to St. Petersburg from the North—and Atlanta certainly is in the northern part of that State—I fished from Captain Len Newsham's Camp at the west end of the Gandy Fill. Having no outboard motor, I was obliged to row the two country miles to the west end of the Gandy Bridge. Or perhaps I should say that my brother and I took turn about on the oars.

The boat itself was a paradox. It had no bow, a lack that the builder had sought to overcome by providing the craft with two sterns. Probably no skiff ever traveled faster without going anywhere. The dudes on the dock had dubbed it a "tub," a description that apparently took into account the rotary motion of the craft as well as the forward speed.

In those days there were no regular tides such as we have now, and always as we rowed out, the tide was coming in, and as we rowed back, the tide was going out.

At that time, we not only didn't know anything about fishing; we didn't even know that we didn't know anything about it. But fortunately for us, the fish weren't much smarter. Although fast as a striped ape and tough as a TV rassler, the average game fish of that era suffered from myopic vision and primitive intellectual development. We hadn't at that stage moved up to the quadruple reel, and our casting technique with the throwline was not unlike an old cowhand drawing a lassoing bead on an errant steer. But heavy snapper lines and leaders and the total lack of modern conveniences seemed not to matter to the snook and the redfish who hammered the hell out of most any bait that was put down to them.

Sometimes when we got tired of the reds and the snook we would go out on the flats with bricklaying cord for the throwline and a five-cent mullet for bait. The single fish would supply enough bait for all day, as the trusting orangemouths slammed into the same cut strip again and again. It was strange how they never seemed to suspect the popping cork.

Being ignorant, we never knew how good we were having it. Instead we longed for the day when, like the dudes, we would own an outboard motor. Thus after saving our Octagonal soap coupons for a short three years, we got our first *Water-Hitch*. But sometimes when the motor was balky we varied the pronunciation of the second part of the brand name.

An oddity of the *Water-Hitch* was that, to start it, only one pull of the starter cord was needed if the motor was on a barrel; but forty pulls if the engine was on the transom of a boat. To remedy this situation we always took a hogshead along on

Charley was casting from a prone position. (Photo by Bob Zimmerman.)

our fishing trips, and if the skies clouded over and we saw a frog-strangling squall coming, we simply put the motor on the hogshead, cranked it with one indifferent pull, and sneaked it over onto the transom before you could say disestablishmentarianism. The only inconvenience in connection with the hogshead was that it had a tendency to get underfoot in the boat sometimes.

But all the while that we were slugging it out toe-to-toe with the perverse *Water-Hitch*—and long after—I was saving my boxtops and giving close heed to the ideals of candidates for public office. Thus in a mere couple of decades I was able to purchase a handsome boat complete with twenty-five Horsepower Jonah outboard.

Many a spectator at the Buy Way Basin at Mileormore Point, eying this sleek craft, has concluded—erroneously—that I am, as the saying goes, "living it up." The error comes about naturally enough, perhaps as a result of my carrying a few angling tools on the boat. But the six casting rods, four spinning rigs, two flyrods, three throwlines, one casting net, and one purse seine mean merely that I want to be prepared if I sight a school of salt-water bream or shell crackers.

Actually, nowadays my missions are nearly all purely scientific; I am charting the shoals, the shallows, and the bars of Lower Tamper Bay. I admit that some of this work is a trifle unintentional, but it is an aid to the novice boatman nevertheless. An interesting sideline is a search for buried clams, which I invariably unearth with the propeller of the outboard. This was a bit disconcerting at first, but I eventually found a dealer who gave me a reduced rate on shear-pins by the gallon.

So well-versed have I become in the topography of the Tamper Bay bottom that I can find my way to the shallows even on the darkest night—and usually do anyhow, whether the time be day or night.

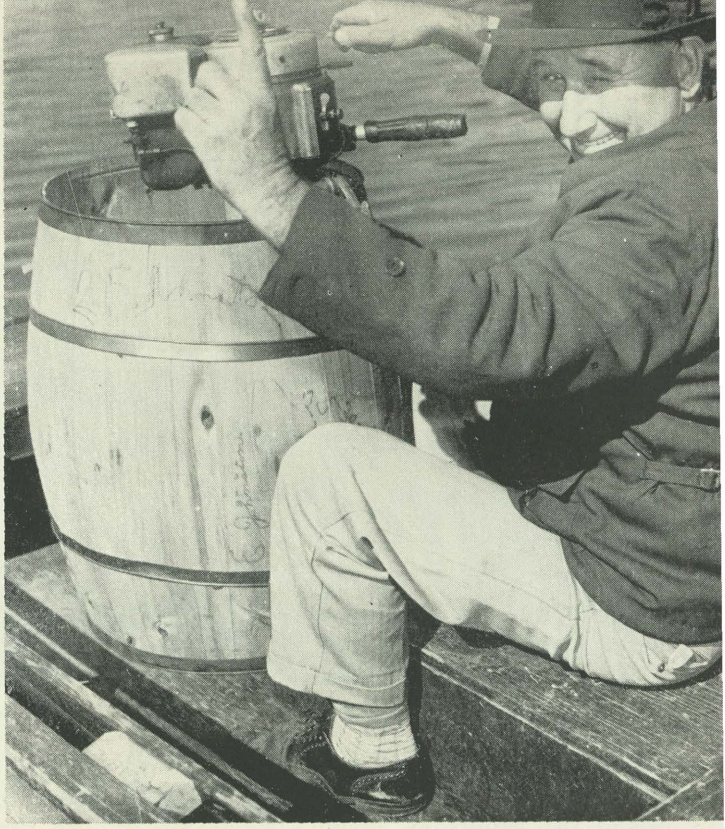
I have often thought how interesting my scientific studies would be if I had some kindred spirit to share them—some kindly itchyologist with a strong back, an inborn aptitude for making complicated outboard motor repairs with the latest type pliers and screwdriver, and an intimate knowledge of boat salvage operations.

But I have concluded—and I say this regretfully—that the purely philosophical and meditative aspects of itchyological research have little appeal even for men of obvious intellectual attainments.

For a time after I first began my studies, it seemed that I had found companionship of the highest quality. Charlie Ruse, who had never tasted a fish-market fish, came along on an expedition and seemed to enjoy himself immensely; the perfection of the outing was, however, marred slightly by two minor incidents.

We had selected the checkered flats hard by the Horsecollar Key for our first drift. Almost immediately I began to assemble a prime string of panfish, *(Lepomis Macrochirus)*, which for some reason Charlie persisted in describing as pinfish, *(Lagodon Rhomboides)*. Though the angling conditions were virtually perfect, the spotted sea trout, *(Cynoscion Nebulosus)*, were not rising. When I expressed puzzlement at this, Charlie consulted his Solemnar tables to discover that the lunker yellowmouths would be hitting cigar butts at worktime Monday morning.

I had early noted an odd mannerism of Charlie's, as he continually bent down and up again, in the manner of a stripling bobbing for apples. I had even found pride in the fact that my lure, a Grassmaster,



We outwitted the "Water-Hitch" with a bit of subtle strategy; we always took a hogshead along with us in the boat. (Photo by Larry Holmgren.)

skimmed his hat each time that he bent low. But when through carelessness on Charlie's part, he was late with his drop, my lure whomped lightly into his back. But in a few minutes he had got his breath back and was casting from a prone position in the bottom of the boat, the better to drift up on the speckled trout, *(Cynoscion Nebulosus)*, without spooking them.

In another instance I feared that Charlie was a little provoked as he stepped on a conch shell. I have since regretted that he did not keep his shoes on as he stepped overside to push the boat off the oyster bar.

But I was sure that Charlie would be eager to go again at an early date, and three or four days later when he was released from the rest home, I invited him to come a-fishing again. He declined regretfully. At one time he had had every week-end—as well as the period from Monday through Friday—free for fishing, but he had lately accepted employment in a salt mine and would henceforth be obliged to pick up all of his fish at the sea food bazaar, as he would have no time at all to go fishing any more.

On one memorable occasion, I received an invitation from Rufe Alley, the jute mill Croesus, to accompany him on a fishing trip on his palatial floating fishing lodge, the *Best Bite*. We had scarcely arrived at the chosen area—the Goose-Egg Grounds adjacent to Waterhaul Key—when my small *Hollow Papa* lure was engulfed by a tremendous pompano, *(Trachinotus Carolinus)*. The battle that ensued rivaled any of the titanic struggles related in the pages of *Yield and Scream*. At one time, the gyrations of the maddened fish caused the tip of my rod to beat a lusty rat-a-tat on Alley's noggin. When at last the gallant fish lay gasping in the net, he emitted a series of sounds not

(Continued on Next Page)

I had noticed an odd mannerism of Charley's. (Photo by Bob Zimmerman.)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

unlike the grunts of a shote who contends with his fellows for the fragments of a burst watermelon. But when I twitted Rufe mildly on his own failure to nab a rare delicacy, he informed me—with what I thought was a trace of asperity—that my catch was in reality a tourist-type pompano, or in the scientific term a hard-tail jack, *(Caranx Hippos)*.

We boasted an assortment of lures that contained every artificial ever heard of—including several that were better unheard of—besides a liberal supply of live baits, including a small but choice selection of catawba worms. But despite this formidable array of weapons, and weather conditions that were seemingly ideal, neither the spotted sea trout, *(Cynoscion Nebulosus)*, nor the regular weakfish, *(Cynoscion Regalis)*, were rising.

Rufe attributed our indifferent success to a condition that he described as *south moon sidewise*. In this complex situation, the temper of the quarry was to spurn artificial or live baits and to seek dead baits instead. But when I suggested hopefully that we dispatch some of our choicest crawdads, Rufe pointed out that the temperamental specs would accept only those baits that had died peacefully. To implement his point, Rufe dug a complicated chart out of his tackle box and ran his finger down the fine print to our day and hour, where I beheld the legend:

Today's Best Bet: *Kelly Pool.*

On the way home, Rufe let me steer the boat, and I played a prominent part in the widening of the Mileormore Bridge. It was evident that the bridge engineers had got the pilings too close together.

In less than a month the *Best Bite* was off the ways and Rufe admitted that the craft had needed a new bottom anyway. But when I pressed Rufe for a new fishing jaunt he informed me regretfully that his time was now taken up completely in his chronicling of the angling joys of others, so much so that he had no time for fishing, or even for visiting the seafood bazaar, but must needs rely on a courier for his mullets.

Another angler of the first rank was George Somberlin of the Denizen's National Bank. A crafty fisherman, George was also a mighty man with the poling oar and the bailing bucket. I well remember our first—and I fear, our last—fishing trip. I had just bought my first spinning outfit, and the perfidious dealer, grinning broadly as he pocketed my wife's butter and egg money, had assured me that mere possession of the spinning equipment would make me an angling master, while the freedom from backlash that the gear provided could make an old pro out of any barefoot boy of thirty-five.

I was delighted with the no-backlash feature of the method, but I suspect that George was mildly perturbed by what might be called a forward-lash, as the coils of the *monofoolament* line leaped off the fixed spool in a loose ball about the size of Rocky Marciano's fist. But with my usual foresight, I had brought along another outfit, so while George untangled the snarled line I continued our angling attack.

Although the conditions were apparently excellent, neither the spotted sea trout, *(Cynoscion Nebulosus)*, nor the regular weakfish, *(Cynoscion Regalis)*, nor the blue fish *(Pomatomus Salatrix)*, were rising. As I expressed some mild discomfiture at the fact, George explained that angling was probably in the *Friday phase*, which would of course rule out Saturday except for the benefits of fresh air, sunshine, and philosophy. He also noted that the wind was from the west and launched into a lengthy dissertation, the gist of which was that when the wind is from the west, television is best. Meanwhile as George had warmed to his topic, he had not noticed how far we were drifting into the ankle-deep flats, and by the time he had discovered his mistake and had gone overside to tow us to water deep enough to accept the outboard, it was time for us to leave the *Shortstrike* grounds. As luck would have it, shortly after we had got underway, a vicious clam leaped up to clobber the propeller, and by the time George had located the pliers, oiled them, and improvised a shear pin and cotter key, it was dark.

Since George had committed himself to returning to the dock at three p. m., he was in dire need of a likely account of his movements for his spouse who might possibly await him at the dock. The problem was solved neatly as in the darkness I brushed a channel marker just enough to tip George into the drink. Thus when the soaked and bedraggled angler arrived at dockside, he was greeted warmly by a sympathetic helpmeet and hustled off to warmth and food.

I learned later through the grapevine that Somberlin had admitted that I had probably saved him from serious injury. A chill like the open door of an icehouse had hit him the next morning when he had espied the ball bat in the back seat of the car. But fortunately the sinister implication of the ball bat was wholly dissipated when further advices revealed that Somberlin's firstborn, captain of the school Nine had left the bludgeon in the Lincoln *(Honest Abe)* by mistake.

But the twin spectres of work and duty closed in on George just as they had on Charley and Rufe, and when I accosted George to suggest a repeat of our pleasant outing, he in-

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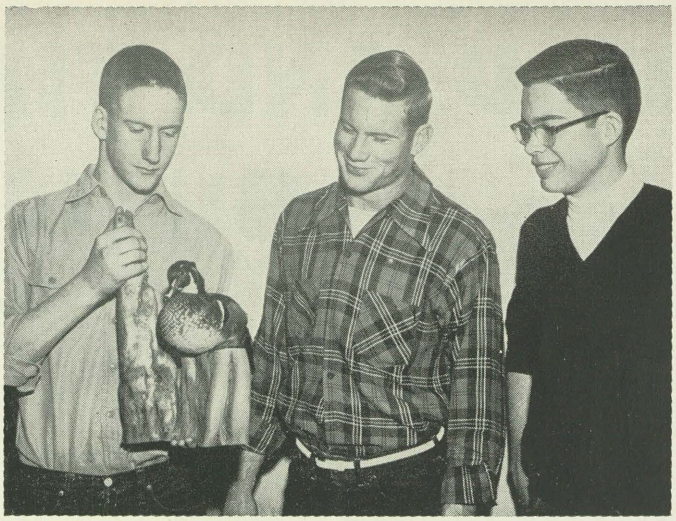
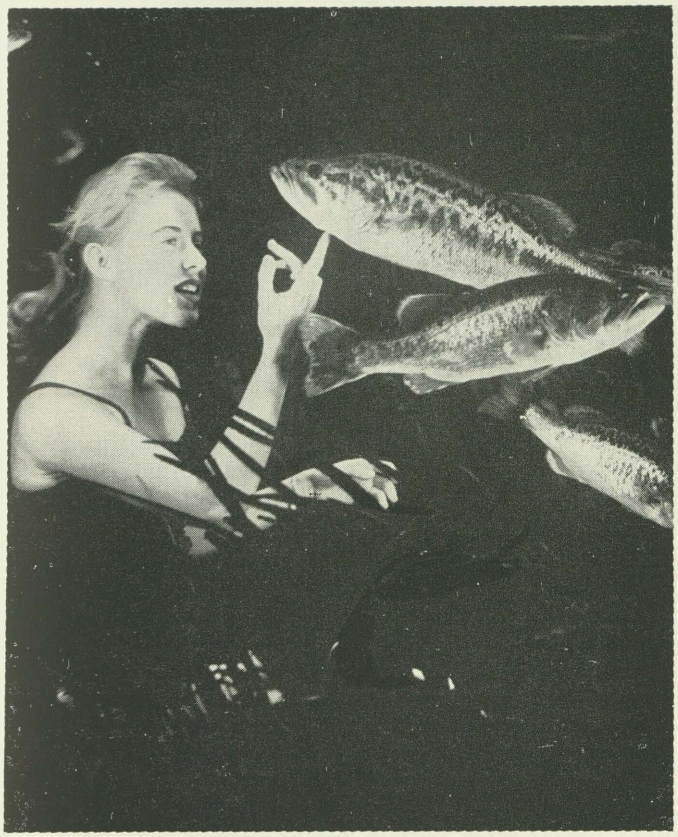
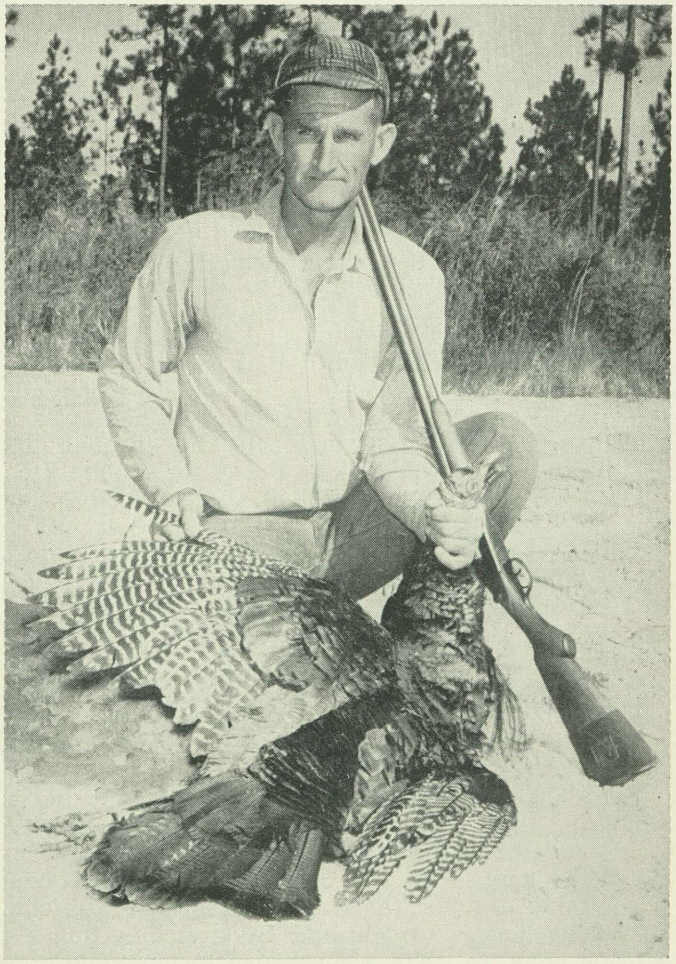
around the state



Officers of the Leon County Junior Rod and Gun Club examine a wood duck specimen prepared by Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission biologist Wayne Murray. Left to right: John Dean, club president; Lloyd Griffith, vice president, and Jimmy DeHaven, treasurer. The club is sponsored by the Tallahassee Optimist Club.



Making friends with a largemouth bass is Miss Jan Beeks, underwater swimmer at Florida's Silver Springs. (Photo by Mozert.)



J. R. Beech, Youngstown, displays a 14½-pound gobbler he killed while deer hunting in the Gaskin Wildlife Management Area of northwest Florida. (Photo by Ed Timmons.)

Wildlife Officer Willard Driggers examines two does killed by game law violators in the Steinhatchee Management area during the second day of the season. (Photo by Ralph Voss.)

DAD AND THE BULL-HEADED BASS

By CARSON ALEXANDER

OLD BEN WALKER lives out of town a piece on a sandtrap farm that is the kind tourists point out as being typical of lazy southerners, then rush on down the road to nowhere feeling real smug about the whole thing. If Old Ben knew that, he'd probably put up a roadblack and try to whip the whole bunch —except the fishermen. These he'd drag down in his pasture and show them the phosphate pit and what's swimming around in there. Then he'd start flinging a plug and hanging on. After fighting it out with two or three buster bass from five to fifteen pounds and had the poor guy's eyes hanging down around his knee-caps and his hands twitching with fishing frenzy, he'd bait up a cane pole to start throwing out plate-sized speckled perch and bream. Then if it was the right time of the year, he'd lead his disorganized spectator down to the north end and show him the nest of the bull-headed bass. Said gent would never be the same again!

Wife beating, excessive drinking and a vacant stare are usual symptoms after such visits to Ben's pool, and probably for tourists, an additional tendency to spend their time nosing around broken down homesteads in hope it's a common condition instead of seeing Silver Springs, Cypress Gardens, and such lesser sights.

Of course, Ben's pretty careful about who he takes around the pit since last winter. Some fellow had a flat in front of the house and Ben got to chatting with him, found out he was a fisherman, and in a neighborly mood showed off his hobby. Ben said it was a terrible experience. The guy went completely off his rocker, begging and pleading and finally throwing a hatful of money around until Ben had to get downright hostile. After he'd been gone about a half hour, Ben happened to look down back and there was a bunch of branches and weeds sneaking through the pasture with a fly rod sticking out of the middle. Ben said he got down there with a shotgun before the first cast, which was a lucky thing since it was a mighty expensive outfit, and peeled his visitor out of the perambulating camouflage. The poor fellow was so heartbroken he was going to throw himself into the pit and drown, but Ben promised to blow his head off if he came up even once so the guy reconsidered. Seems like it turned out he was a fishing camp operator from Maine or Michigan or some such place, but that's another story and I started out to tell about the bull-headed bass.

Ben's the way he is because that's the way he is, simple as that, and, like I say, it's easy to get the wrong idea about his place. Actually he's got a sockful of the long green and doesn't worry about much of anything. It's just the way he likes things to look, sort of lived in you might say. By stretching things a bit you could call him a gentleman farmer. The crop he grows is in that pasture pond and it's a sight to see. Ben's got more technical information on the subject than a government bureau.

There used to be only one person Ben would let fish his pool besides himself and that was my Dad. They did all their battling around its edges, yelling and cussing and insulting each other while they caught fish and turned them loose, keeping score by breaking off dog fennel, then arguing the other was cheating. I once counted 61 broken bushes, and I know that was a true count because most of the time I was their referee. Only once did I get to fish that pool, but that time made up for all the refereeing and wanting.

I was 13 at the time it started, I know because on that birthday Dad had taken me fishing in Tiger Lake for a present. Coming back, we stopped at Ben's that afternoon and saw him coming up through the pasture. Before he got to yelling distance you could see something had him real excited. Ben normally looks like an old coon hide that was just salted down, tossed in a corner and forgotten, but now he was wilder looking than any man I ever saw.

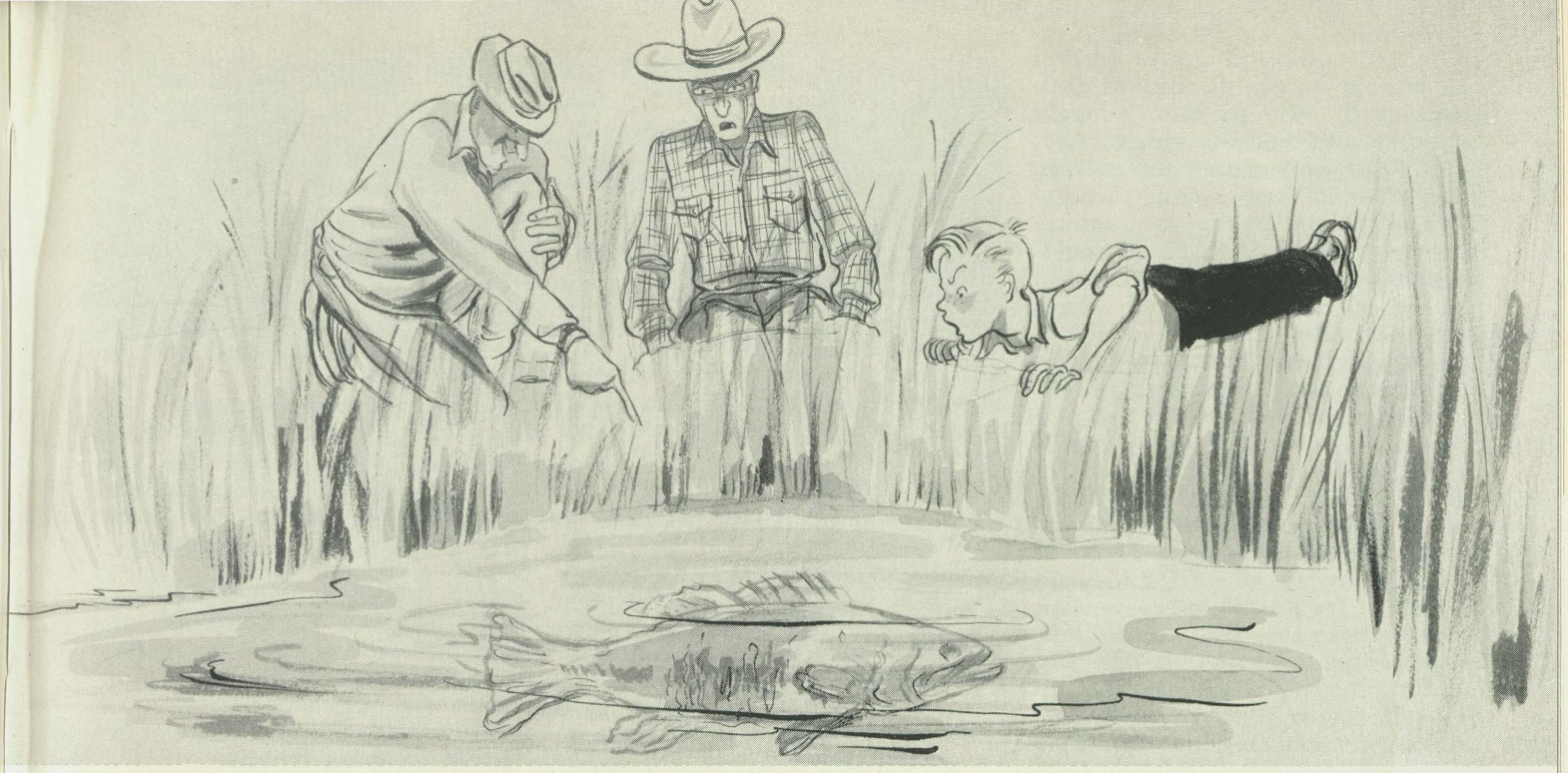
"Art!" he stuttered to Dad, "You ain't gonna believe it anymore'n I did. Fact is, we better go back down there and see if I been seeing things."

Like most of the real old phosphate diggings Ben's pit didn't have any raw hills of overburden around it, but the pasture grass grew smooth to the edge, marred only by the fennel patches, and dropped in steep three foot banks into some 40 feet of clear silver-green water. On a calm sunny day you could lie above and look way down to where it turned ice-blue and see the lunkers easing along shore just hoping something would fall in. Course it was silly, but I used to wonder if maybe they were looking at me that way. At the south end there was one shallow cove where most of the fish spawned and sawgrass grew thick along the edges as cover for the fry. Sometimes you couldn't stick the end of a pole in the bottom without hitting a bed, and Ben, or Dad, would have shotgunned anyone fishing there then.

Ben led us to the other end and began making shushing motions way back from the water.

"Art," he said, "crawl up to that grass hummock and look right below where the drainage has spread that leetle bar."

Dad said, "You old coot—", then shook his head and did like he was asked. The sun was getting low and he didn't see it at first, then he stiffened as if jabbed in the rear with a hatpin. It was all very mysterious and I was about to bust with wondering when Dad came scuttling back. I shot up there on all fours and bellied down before anyone could say no and took a careful look. The little sand wash was underwater, about three feet long, and shaped like a fan. Laying over a bed swept out on it was a bass so big her tail brushed the bank slope and her nose stuck out over the drop off. She was tremendous. There was something about that moment I'll never forget. Behind me Dad and Ben were raising Hail Columbia for fear I'd spook the bass while



the low sun was painting the sky blood-red and its fever reflected in the water below. I could feel the damp coming up from the ground, and I got to shaking so hard I could hardly crawl.

Going back to the house Ben kept saying what a crazy place it was for a fish to bed and how one that size wouldn't ever get caught. Then they got into an argument as usual when Ben leaned against a gatepost with a funny look on his face.

"Art, I'm getting old," he said.

Dad just snorted, still excited by the bass.

"That's the biggest bass I ever seen," Ben continued.

"Yep!" Dad said. You could tell he was imagining that monster on the end of a line.

"I oughta ketch'er!"

Dad came back to earth with a thud. "You WHAT!"

"Get me a record before I die."

"Off the *bed?*"

"Only way to ketch a bass like that." They were glaring now like a pair of grizzled roosters.

"Well I'll be dammed!" Dad said, forgetting I was around. "You old hypocrite, I believe you mean it."

"Dang right I mean it!" Ben yelled, madder at himself than anything else, but gone too far to back down now. "Tomorrow mornin' I'm gonna fling a Dalton in there first thing."

Dad had been getting red in the face, but now he began to hee-haw. "Dalton!" he said sarcastically, "You throw a topwater in there and you'll scare that bass to hellanbreakfast. I ain't worried about *you* catchin' her then, even off the bed, and any fool can do that."

Young as I was, I could see this thing was getting serious. Ben was white as a sheet, and Dad's face had a queer pinched look about it. The silence kept getting deeper until Ben asked real quiet, "You could do better?"

"Certainly!" Dad blurted, then could've bit off his tongue, suddenly realizing he'd been gilled neat as you please.

Ben laughed wickedly, "Old hypocrite, huh? We'll toss a coin at daylight for first try." Then he turned and stalked into the house.

Dad raised a hand like he might stop him, but let it fall wordlessly. He looked sick and I knew why. Wrong as it was, Dad wanted that bass bad as Ben. He didn't look at me all the way into town and I was glad because I was awful ashamed, too. During dinner Dad just picked at his chicken and Mom kept asking him if he was sick and he'd say no, and go right on doodling. Afterwards he tried the paper, but you could see he wasn't reading, until finally he went out into the back yard. I watched out a window and though it was pretty dark I saw he was picking up rocks from Mom's rose garden and sticking them in his pocket. Soon he came in to get his hat, and telling Mom he'd be back in a minute, started out the front door. Real quick I said I was going across the alley to see Jerry, a pal of mine, and ducked out the back, only I didn't go to Jerry's, but jumped in the rear seat of the car and hunkered down on the floor. Dad got in front never knowing I was there and drove off.

After while I could tell we were out of town when the street lights stopped shining in and not long afterwards the car pulled off to the side of the road and Dad got out in the dark. When I couldn't hear his steps anymore, I looked out and saw he'd stopped down the road from Ben's and was climbing through the fence at the north end of the pasture. I followed as close as I could without being seen.

Dad went straight to the pit and I could see him trying to locate the position of the bed. Then he started throwing rocks, and he sure made them chunk when they hit. I could just see that big old bass cutting water out of there for good. It's a wonder Dad didn't see me when he turned, but I laid down flat and he went by not 20 feet away walking straight and hard like he was happy about something. I began to get worried about being left then and ran like blazes up toward the house to get to the road and beat Dad to the car.

I was pretty close when the back door opened throwing light all over the place and I fell behind a gallberry bush just as Ben stepped out on the porch. He must-ve heard the car start just like I

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did, but he barely glanced in that direction. It was common enough for neckers to be using a dark road like that anyway. I thought he was going to stand there all night smoking his pipe and batting a mosquito now and then. I was wishing I could hit them too because they were eating me alive, but I didn't dare move. About the time I couldn't stand it any longer, he walked down the steps, pulled some oranges off a tree, and started toward the pit. Soon as he was far enough away, I lit out for home. Even up on the road I could hear Ben cussing a blue streak, punctuated by those oranges hitting the water.

Next morning when Dad shook me awake I was sore all over from running those two miles home, but I didn't let on for fear he'd make me stay in bed. Dad was feeling good all the way to Ben's house, laughing and cutting the fool like he always did going fishing. Ben was chipper too, and you wouldn't have thought they'd ever been mad the way they insulted each other flipping the coin.

At the pit the sun was just peeking over the pines. Ben asked me to slip around and check on the bass, speaking all too casually. I did, and durned if that big scutter wasn't laying in the same position, rocks and green oranges she'd pushed out of the nest all around her. Well, you could see all the bad feeling come flooding back when I yelled she was still there. Why it is grownups won't admit to each other they're making a mistake, especially two old cronies like Dad and Ben, I'll never know. Whichever one caught that bass didn't make much difference now because when it happened their friendship was done. They quit their joshing and got in the little boat grim and quiet, neither one willing to be the first to back out.

Ben had won the toss and was swishing his rod like it was a stranger while Dad paddled out to perfect position for the cast. Finally he turned one loose and the plug arced out straight and true, but at the last moment Ben got something that probably hadn't happened to him in 10 years, a backlash. The plug popped at the end of the line and sloshed into the water short. I saw the old bass make an angry turn around the nest and settle over it fanning, watching the plug in case it came nearer. Ben was clearing the reel when out of the depths beyond the nest a green torpedo tried to knock the Dalton into the next county. Ben worked the yearling, but there wasn't any fun in it until he was sure what was on the line, then he grinned a little in relief.

They were changing places in the boat for Dad's turn with a pork rind spoon when it happened, and it was so phony to someone watching I would've laughed at two grown men trying to fool each other like that if it hadn't been so serious. As the boat rocked a little naturally, Dad seemed to lose his balance and dropped his outfit overboard, a matched rig he thought as much of as his right hand. Mom would've washed my mouth out with soap for a week if she heard the things I said to myself at such silliness, but Dad and Ben acted like it was a natural thing. Dad said he'd have to get his spare outfit and take his turn next morning because he had a lot of business to take care of the rest of the day and Ben said, sure, so we left. Nobody even said goodbye.

Going home I got to thinking real hard. Sooner or later one of them would hook the bass because old hands like them would eventually slip up and do something right out of pure habit and my chances of ever fishing Ben's pool would be kaput. Then I noticed the case of Dad's spare outfit sticking up in the back seat, he'd had it with him all the time. I decided to take some drastic measures to clear the fool business up.

Getting at Dad's tackle wasn't hard at all, I took care of that right after he left for the shop. Taking care of Ben's was going to be a little harder, but since he kept it in a little shed back of the house I figured it could be done. Then I got to wondering if it was enough, what I figured on doing to their tackle. Maybe a little added insurance wouldn't hurt. Everyone went to bed early that night, and as soon as I was certain the family was asleep I sneaked out to my bike, grabbing the bag, rod, and a can hidden under the porch earlier.

Dark as it was I had a little trouble finding the exact spot where the big bass lay. Ben's house was just a formless lump against the road trees, and the frogs were tuning up from the pit with cricket fiddles from the pasture grass. The lake didn't look friendly like in daylight, but cold and spooky, the water black oil in the faint star shine. I hooked a big gob of red wrigglers on my line, and pulling out some slack, tossed it carefully into the bed. I could imagine it drifting down, the floating line diving under to the pull of sinkerless hook until it hit bottom, the worms stretching, trying to crawl.

There was a twitch at the line, just a little one, and I struck back hard not wanting the bass to swallow the bait deep. There wasn't any doubt about what I'd hooked as the fish surged away and a heavy boil exploded near the bank. Her first run wasn't long, just steady and unbelievably powerful while I fed line helplessly. The bass stopped and shook her head like a roped steer rattling my teeth. I tried to reel and she was off again straight away down the pit. This one didn't stop. I sidestepped around the edge trying to get to the parallel bank, expecting the line end as the backing knot whipped out. Almost falling into the water, I stumbled along trying not to, and after endless time made it. I ran to gain line cranking like mad, tripping, fighting for breath and aching with strain. At the shelving boat landing I stopped, heaving like a spavined colt. I knew if I went further I'd never land her from the higher banks ahead, but she was done, too. Heavily she wallowed in until the great head was against the bank. Shaking with fatigue and excitement I eased the enormous weight up on the grass and sat down alongside. Out of the water she was even more tremendous, a magical heaving blur.

Slowly I began to understand how Ben and Dad were tempted to throw away a lifetime of sportsmanship. Never had I wanted to keep anything so much. Only another fisherman could know why. Carefully I slid her into the big live well by the boat landing. If

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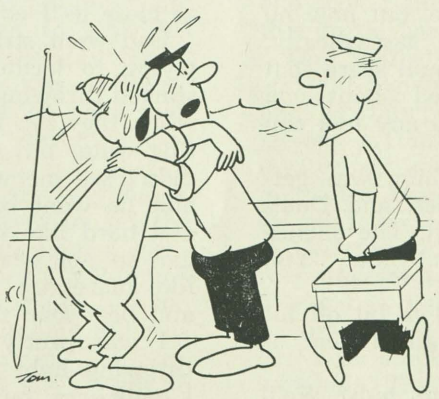


"I just asked him how the fishing was."

THE AMERICAN ANGLER by A. J. McClane. Published by Henry Holt & Company, Inc., 383 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. Price $5.00. 207 pages, 33 photographic illustrations.

In his foreword, McClane points out that clearly the easiest way to catch big fish is to go where big fish are found. That there are such places the author explains, is reflected in the results of the annual *Field and Stream* fishing contest. Certain waters have manufactured tackle-busters year after year with such regularity that it can be predicted quite accurately where contest winners are going to come from next year.

The American Angler deals with every major type of game fish caught in America from the smallmouth black bass to the golden trout. It contains growth-rate charts and other valuable information that will help you figure out where the big fish are. There is a wealth of information regarding feeding habits, individual characteristics, and fighting strategy. It is a valuable guide to finding, hooking, and netting a record fish.

Written by A. J. McClane, Fishing Editor of *Field and Stream* magazine, much of the material is based on his personal experience. Added to the factual material from the Fishing Contest the result is an up-to-date guide for the angler who is interested in seeking out the better than average specimens of a variety of American game fish.

* * * *

MODERN SPEARFISHING by Vane Ivanovic. Published by A. S. Barnes & Company, 232 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. 203 pages, illustrated with line drawings and photographs.

The direct descendant of the wartime frogmen, skin-diving is fast becoming one of the most popular aquatic pastimes. Wearing goggles, flippers on his feet, and a harpoon gun in his hands, the swimmer enters a new and often beautiful world. It is a fascinating sport undertaken in the out-of-this-world atmosphere of the sea-bed.

The author is one of the pioneers of the sport, having practiced it in his native Yugoslavia before the war. Since then he has contributed greatly to its development in Spain, France, Bermuda, and the Bahamas.

He stresses that it is not necessary to be a very experienced swimmer to excel below the sea; in fact it is often the novice who bags the biggest fish.

The book is divided into eight chapters: Amphibian Man, Fishing Grounds, Equipment and Training, The Technique of Spearfishing, Breathing Under Water. The Human Body and Pressure, Perils and Morals, and Something About Fishes.

* * * *

BLACK BASS FISHING by Robert Page Lincoln. Published by The Stackpole Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Price $5.00.

Robert Page Lincoln, one of America's pioneer bass fishermen, has drawn upon his vast knowledge and wide experience with bass to present in this book the most comprehensive book on the subject we have yet read.

Modern tackle and up-to-the-minute techniques are discussed in detail. Lures mentioned in the discussion are called by the names given them by their respective manufacturers, but commercialization is not a factor, for Bob Lincoln was not affiliated with any firm which produces tackle.

Frequently the author drifts into the bayous of reminiscence, but it is always to illustrate some point in question. His deductions from personal experiences are most illuminating. Every method of fishing for bass is dealt with in turn in a complete manner.

The chapter devoted to Florida bass fishing is loaded with specific names of places familiar to Sunshine State bass anglers. The detailed discussion of varied fishing methods, baits and artificials are of value to the newcomer to Florida's waters.

The book will appeal to the novice who is in the process of organizing his thought and equipment; it will be valuable to one who realizes that he must alter his tackle and technique to realize more action; and it will be appreciated by the expert who is far advanced in his own thinking.

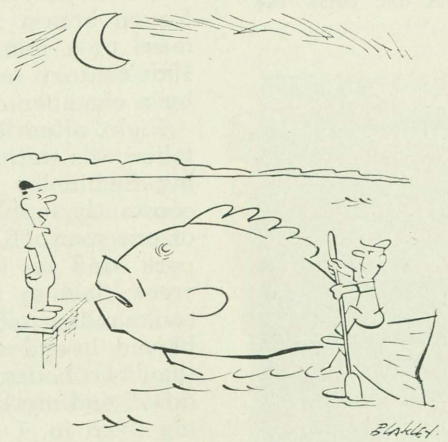
* * * *

STRIPED BASS FISHING by Henry Lyman and Frank Woolner. Published by A. S. Barnes and Company, 232 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. Price $4.00. 242 pages.

This is the first full length book devoted exclusively to striped bass and striped bass sport fishing. Here are the latest facts brought to light by modern research on the habits of the species, as well as the history of the fishery, which dates to colonial times.

Written by two men who make striped bass fishing their business as well as their hobby (Lyman is the publisher, Woolner the editor of *Salt Water Sportsman* magazine), no detail on the sport is omitted. Where the fish are found, how they are caught, and discussions of tackle and methods are all included in this comprehensive book.

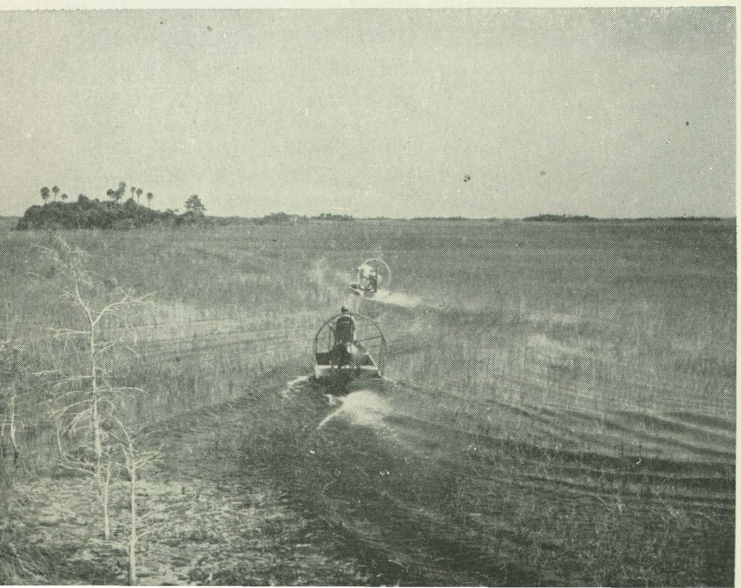
It covers thoroughly the very latest information of rods, reels, lines, lures, baits, and accessories. To the seeker of striped bass whether a beginner or experienced hand, Striped Bass Fishing contains much information of interest and value. END



"Just one?"

Near Eau Gallie on the St. Lucie River 80 years ago the folks were talking about a proposed canal from the head marshes of the St. Johns. Today they're still talking about the same thing.

A 19th recommendation was a boat as standard equipment for every Florida traveler as most of Florida was underwater. Above is the old method of traveling the Everglades and below the modern way.



IN THE

HUNTIN' AND FISHIN' in Florida ain't what it used to be! And in many ways, thank goodness. However, there's still a lot of things just about the same.

For instance, this writer who wrote in 1875 giving us the word on the battling black bass, could have been writing last month with a few alterations to observe legal limits, etc.

"The species most widely diffused, and also the most valued, is the black trout or bass. This species is also found in the western lakes and rivers, but in Florida it grows to a larger size; specimens of eight, ten, and twelve pounds being sometimes taken."

Of course, everybody knows that the Florida black bass is the biggest, fightin'est, denizen of the fresh waters.

The writer describes the tackle, "a bob, which is a bunch of gay-colored feathers with two or three large hooks concealed in it . . . is fastened to a yard or two of strong line, and this to a stout reed pole." You boys take a look in your tackle box and see how many bobs you've got, or maybe you call them jigs.

And how does he use this tackle? Well, "the fisherman sits in the bow of a canoe, which is paddled by one in the stern, and kept at such a distance from the weedy shore that the bob may be skittered along the margin." My, my, but these "how-to" articles by the experts haven't changed much.

We said huntin' and fishin' ain't what it used to be and here's some ain't. "Once on the Upper St. Johns . . . two of us took, with spoons, trawling from the stern of a steamer, twenty or thirty black bass in an hour or two; they were from two to six pounds in weight."

You'd probably have a hard time finding a steamer on the Upper St. Johns to troll from, but you might use a skiff and a kicker. Eight bass is now the legal limit and "twenty or thirty" would be a fair invitation to visit "hizzonner" accompanied by a nattily dressed Wildlife Officer. Also, as any self-respecting chamber of commerce publicist will tell you, two pound Florida black bass are so ashamed of their size that they hide until they at least weigh enough for an honest fisherman to exaggerate their silvery mass to a minimum of five pounds. But then, our 19th century reporter might not have been employed by a chamber of commerce.

Right after the Seminole War, a whole army battalion was stationed on the St. Johns to keep marauding Seminoles from marauding. This battalion was constantly supplied with fresh bass through the efforts of one man. His method was trolling with a strip of pork rind on a large hook across the mouth of a creek flowing into the river. Sound familiar? His commanding officer went with him once to see how he did it and wrote, "This sport continued for less than two hours, when finding my boat nearly loaded down, and my little fingers well cut and sore by hauling them in, I concluded to stop at the round number of fifty, and returned to the post. When I weighed my fish . . . the smallest weighed 4½ pounds and the largest 14½ pounds, giving a fair average of 10 pounds, or 500 pounds in all." They're still calling this area the "Bass Capital of the World," but, thank

GOOD OLD DAYS

goodness, the bass angler today does not have to keep a wary eye out for marauding Seminoles!

Along the St. Johns about a hundred years ago, a small, heavily bearded, ex-New Englander named Jacob Brock sought a livelihood. He was a steamboat captain, plying between the bustle of Jacksonville (1,045 persons) and the jungle solitude of the upriver settlements. Brock's language, as colorful as a Florida sunset and as spicy as a tamale, is reputed to have at one time singed the hairs from a brass monkey. This report is considered by most authorities to contain a small degree of exaggeration as the usual run of brass monkeys have no hair. Nevertheless, Brock's profanity did not prevent his seeing the possibilities of building a quality hostel for steamboat passengers on the shore of Lake Monroe at Enterprise. This was, in the early 1850s, about as near the ends of the earth as the sportsman accustomed to the niceties cared to venture. The Brock House flourished and from the hotel's register, where well-heeled nimrods inscribed their feats, the following is taken:

"March 19, 1872—killed a large alligator, the largest seen here this year; the stomach contained a boot, a piece of pine wood, a fisherman's float, and some small fish.

"March 24, 1872—killed a much bigger alligator than the one mentioned above. The stomach contained a gold watch, $10,000 in government bonds, and a cord of wood.

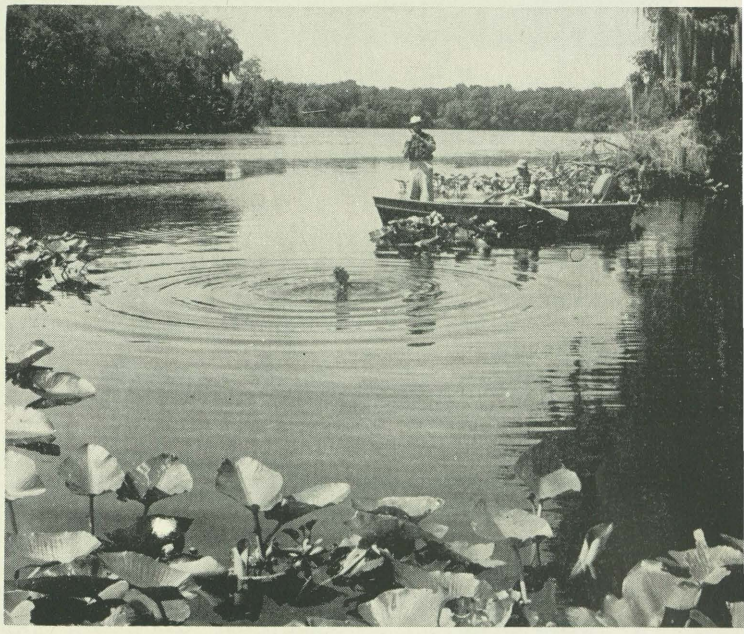
(On the following page)—"Shot the biggest alligator ever known in Florida; the stomach contained the remains of a steam launch, a lot of old railway iron, and a quantity of melted ice, proving that it existed during the glacial epoch."

Hunting has changed more than the hunters!

Before you can hunt and fish, you've got to get where you can, so northern sportsmen read this and weep: "Steamship fare, New York to Jacksonville, including state room and meals, $27.50; excursion rate, $50.00." As this was in the days when you usually camped out because hunting and fishing camps were as scarce as unattached blondes, while you're figuring how far your money would have gone, you better pick up 50 pounds of salt pork for five dollars, 60 pounds of flour for three dollars, and some potatoes at a dollar a bushel. If you preferred to stay in a small inn or boarding house in a small town, your room and board would have run 10 to 14 dollars a week depending on how much flair you liked with your "vittles." By the same token, your expenses in Florida would have been "from $100 to $150 per month, according to the habits of the traveler."

At the present time, many Florida east coast residents are deeply concerned over a proposed canal from the St. Johns River marshes across to Indian River. For their benefit we quote the following which was written 80 years ago:

"At Elbow Creek and across the river on the eastern shore, is the finest picturesque portion of the river (Indian). It was here that the famous canal, to connect the St. Johns with Indian River was to terminate. It was to be about seven miles in length.



Right after the Seminole War one soldier kept his whole army battalion supplied with fresh bass caught at the mouth of a creek flowing into the St. Johns. The angler above was getting his legal limit at the same place a couple of months ago.

A company was formed, a dredge boat set to work at Lake Washington, lands purchased, a town laid out on paper, and now the machinery of the boat is being transported to Sand Point for use in a sawmill, and "Eau Gallie" has just as many inhabitants as it had before the bubble was blown. No doubt can exist as to the suitability of the locality for a town, could one be started; the high pine land slopes grad-

(Continued on Page 49)

The home of the "tarpum" has been invaded by the concrete and steel of the fabulous Sunshine Skyway, but old silver sides is still around.

muzzle flashes

By EDMUND McLAURIN

In order to shoot a sporting firearm accurately, it must first be picked up or supported in some manner. The way it is held during the brief moments of directed fire has great bearing on the accuracy that will result. Particularly is this true in the firing of a pistol or so-called handgun.

Good scores with a handgun represent, as with a rifle, nothing more than accurately placed single hits—repeated! This last is not easily accomplished. To shoot accurately and uniformly from shot to shot, one's grip on the aimed weapon must be consistent and comfortable, among other things. In short, the gun, like clothing, must fit the shooter.

Given two handguns of equal accuracy, the marksman will do his best shooting with the one that fits his hand most naturally and comfortably.

Most factory supplied handgun stocks are made to fit "average" hands (according to explanations by the manufacturers), but few persons have "average" hands and enjoy perfect stock fit from the start of their handgun shooting. Like faces, hands are notoriously individualistic. Occasionally you may see look-alikes in facial features or in hand shapes but generally there will be marked differences. Consequently, standard factory stocks truly fit few hands, and fortunate indeed is the handgunner who finds a factory stock a perfect fit.

We cannot change the shape and size of the hands with which Nature endowed us, but we can acquire the style of pistol grips that will fit the gun-holding hand.

But having just paid out a substantial sum for a quality, so-called "complete" handgun, the new owner usually is not too happy when faced with the extra cost of a pair of custom-made grips, carved and inletted to fit his hand and gun frame. "Are they necessary and, if so, why? Are they worth their represented cost?" he will usually want to know.

First reflect on the fact that designating a particular object by pointing at it with extended arm and forefinger is a common gesture. The most natural and desirable handgun hold, therefore, is one that incorporates the held gun as merely an extension of the shooter's extended arm and hand, so that an imaginary line drawn from the point of the shoulder to the V formed by thumb and trigger finger will pass through the sights when the arm is fully extended for taking aim. Tailor-made grips, designed to fit the hand that will grasp them, help achieve this geometrical ideal and encourage natural pointing of the held gun. This is one answer to the shooter's question, "Are custom-made handgun grips necessary and why?"

When taking aim, the handgunner should have the feeling that he is holding and controlling his pistol with his thumb's base muscles and behind the large joint of his trigger finger, the gun seemingly resting primarily on his middle finger.

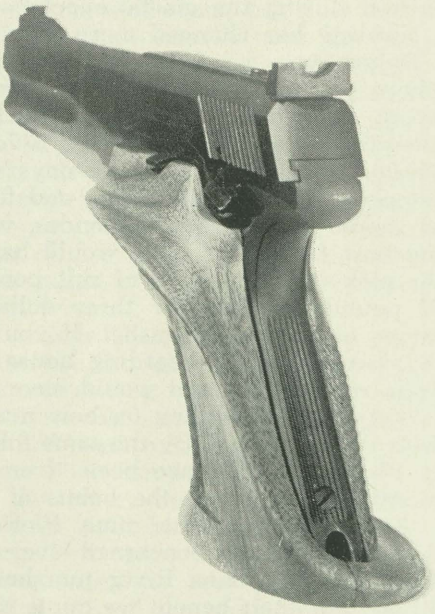
Actually, the job of supporting a held handgun falls heavily on only a few parts of the hand—not the whole hand. Except for the working trigger finger tip, the tips of one's fingers should not touch the gun nor exert any pressure at all. Further, the second or middle finger, back of the trigger guard, supports most of the weight of the aimed gun, aided by the heel of the hand placed firmly against the gun-frame's backstrap. Only the tip of the trigger finger—at some point between its extreme tip and first joint-crease therefrom—sees action. The remaining portion of the trigger finger forms a right angle and does not contact the gun. The thumb lies alongside the left side of the frame, close to the latch (if a revolver), or in a provided grooved rest. So held, a handgun finds a natural and snug resting place between thumb and first finger, in direct line with the shooter's wrist.

Proper fitting of the gun to the hand is best obtained by first picking up the pistol in the left hand and carefully positioning it in the right (or vice versa if one happens to be left-handed). The idea is to immediately get a perfect hand-and-gun fit and to maintain it throughout firing.

At the moment of firing, developed recoil and gun motion can cause stock slippage in the hand holding it, or there can be erratic movement at the shooter's wrist joint, at the same time that the barrel whips upward. The handgun's natural tendency is to recoil away from the hand as well as up. Skipping the technical explanations, it is desirable from the standpoint of obtaining consistent accuracy that (1) the shooter's hand resistance to developed and exerted recoil be constant in both direction and degree; that (2) a uniform position of the hand on the pistol grip be maintained, and (3) that uncontrolled wrist leverage not be an undesirable addition to normal barrel whip. Custom-made grips tend to equalize the various factors and keep the gun's muzzle pointing in a straight line so that, when a shot is fired, it recoils straight up and then again settles down on the target for the next shot.

An example of an ill-fitting stock and hard to control handgun is found in the .45 caliber government automatic.

Besides the psychological effects of its big voice and buck, the .45 government-style automatic is also hard to shoot accurately because its grip (frame) is so large that not many hands find it a comfortable fit. Consequently, relatively few



This custom-made walnut grip, fitted to a Colt Match Target Woodsman, was made by Steven J. Herrett, Twin Falls, Idaho. Note how their general shape and contours provide hand support and give better gun control at all strategic contact points with the shooter's gun-hand.

shooters can keep the big gun from twisting in the hand as it roars and recoils. Maintaining a uniform finger position and applied grip pressure, important factors to consistent accuracy with any handgun, are two things especially difficult to do when firing the .45—and if any handgun can be said to be sensitive to handgrip changes, it is the .45 government sidearm. Controlling the big .45, through a correctly taken handhold, is absolutely necessary to sustained accuracy.

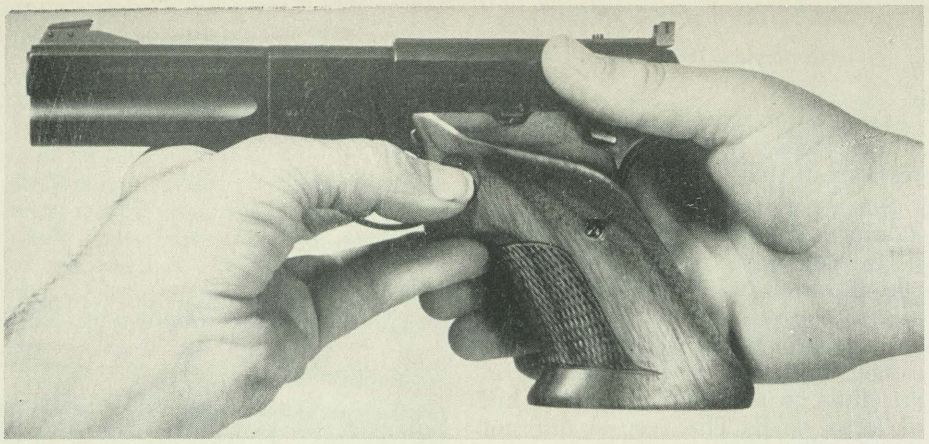
Control of the .45 automatic can be aided by substitution of custom-made grips having a thumb rest filler, a concaved front strap and a wrist-lock extension, to keep the heavy gun pointing in a straight line mentally drawn through the shooter's forearm and wrist, the gun seated deeply in the hand between thumb and first finger.

Poor stock fit is also a primary reason why many of the pocket-model defense weapons, like some of the pocket .38's carried by bank and payroll guards and detectives, are difficult to shoot accurately. In the pocket model handgun versions, stocks are more apt to be too small for average hands rather than too large. With proper stocks, made to fill and comfortably fit the shooter's gun-hand, and to bring about more natural barrel alignment with target, a short-barreled, hard-bucking defense weapon can be considerably more effective for defense and more pleasant to shoot in practice than when used with factory supplied stocks.

The excellent, natural, feeling grips on the old Colt "Peacemaker" revolver of frontier fame had much to do with its popularity. Users found that when quickly drawn from a holster and aimed, it automatically pointed at desirable belt-buckle level. Hand one of those old guns to a pistol shooter of our age and invariably he will make favorable comment about the way the gun feels to his hand . . . In the "Peacemaker," Colt probably came closest to fitting "average" hands.

One reason the new Hi-Standard "Sentinel" revolver has been so well received has been because of its excellent stock—one with a "natural" feel, with molded thumb rest integrated with the gun's frame and a general shape that enables the finger behind the trigger guard to really balance and support the gun.

Likewise, the Hammerli pistol, of Olympic competition, can be shot very accurately because its elaborate and thick grips, featuring a wide, curved shelf for the heel of the shooter's hand and a groove for his thumb, give maximum aid and comfort to the hand holding the gun. However, these highly specialized Hammerli stocks, combined with special trigger mechanisms, are suited only to deliberate slow-fire; they cannot be used in American matches fired under our range rules. Custom-made or altered factory stocks are permitted, however, for tournament use and find added practical use for between-tournament informal target shooting.



To correctly grip a handgun, first pick it up with your left hand and then fit it to your right (vice versa if you happen to be left-handed), so that the gun finds a natural and snug resting place between thumb and first finger, in direct line with your wrist, and with most of the gun's weight and balance seemingly on the second or middle finger, aided by the heel of the hand placed firmly against the gun-frame's backstrap.

With all due respect to Lew Sanderson, Walter Murad, Griffin & Howe and Walter Roper, who created some very fine custom-made handgun grips that have proved their worth, this department gives judge's nod for first place to Steven J. Herrett, of Twin Falls, Idaho. Herrett's stocks, made from extra-select grade walnut, fit the hand like a comfortable dress glove and the checkering, precision frame fitting and good workmanship are such as to delight any handgunner who appreciates quality.

Herrett specializes in making grips for the Colt .45 automatic, .22 Ruger, the Colt .22 automatics, the Hi-Standards and the Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers. He works to individual hand measurements only; does not mass produce models nor sells rough or semi-inletted blanks.

In ordering custom-made handgun stocks from any source, it is important that an accurately drawn outline of the shooter's hand be submitted, together with pertinent information relative to make, model and caliber of gun owned, its barrel length and hammer-style, total gun weight and mention of any unusual muscular condition or partially crippling hand injury suffered by the shooter.

In making outlines for a stockmaker to evaluate for correct size grips, take a large sheet of smooth paper and, on one side, list all the information mentioned in the foregoing paragraph. Place your shooting hand on the same sheet of paper, palm down, using your entire forearm for additional support as you place the gun hand on the paper. (By using the forearm as support for the hand you will reduce to a minimum the tendency to press too hard and undesirably change the hand's natural contours.)

Next, move your thumb toward your body as far as it will conveniently go. This will tense the muscles and eliminate distortion of width across the back of the hand to its heel.

Now move your trigger finger toward the thumb as far as comfortable, keeping the other fingers immobile. This positioning of the hand will create an approximate right angle between thumb and middle finger.

Take an ordinary lead pencil, hold it vertically and trace around the hand from wrist joint to wrist joint. In tracing, hold the pencil firmly enough to follow your hand's outline but do not pull the pencil in enough to indent the flesh. It is imperative that a degree of caution be exercised in this procedure. Be exact; do not exaggerate or minimize any portion of the hand's natural outline. When completed, the drawing should be barely visible all the way around when viewed from a vertical position.

Given such an outline any stockmaker worth his salt can make handgun grips to fit the hand from which the drawing was made.

Some shooters make their own

(Continued on Page 50)

SELECTIVE POISONING

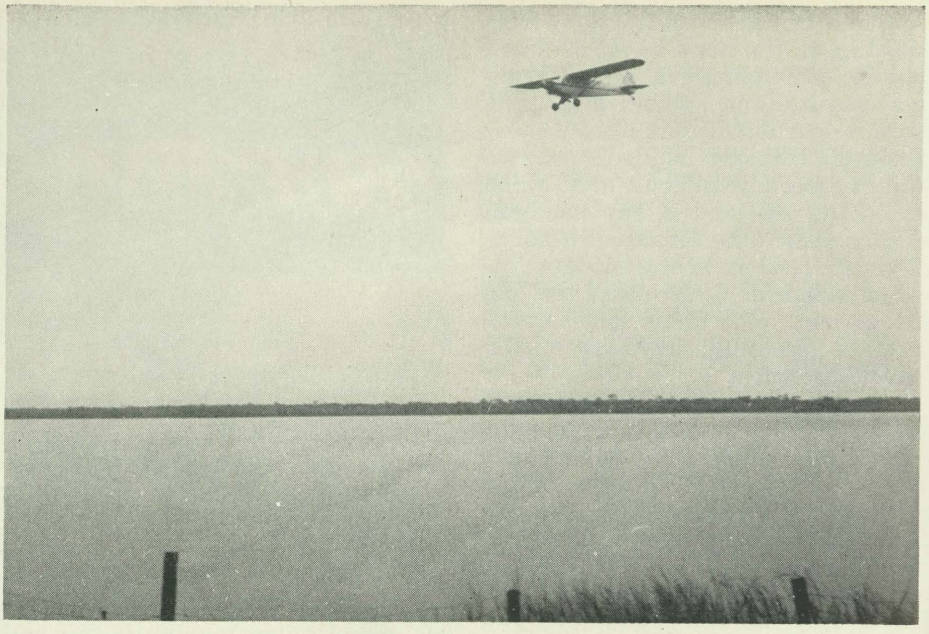
(Continued from Page 17)

bass. Smaller sized gizzard shad succumb to considerably lower concentrations of the poison.

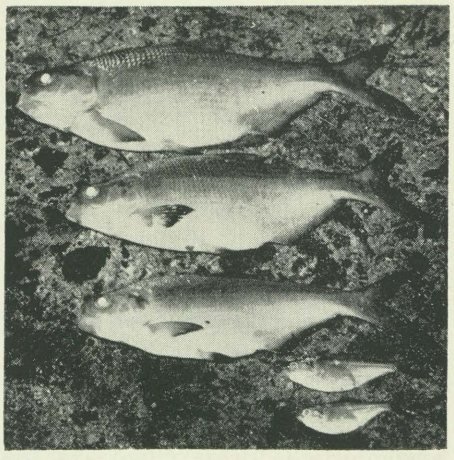
Since the bass population of Lake Trafford was of minor importance percentage-wise it was decided to use an amount larger than .10 ppm (parts per million) a concentration which had previously been determined as not harmful to bass, in an effort to affect a substantial kill of large shad. The results did not show that such was actually the case however for the principal kill was among the smaller gizzard shad which were numerous but did not constitute the bulk of the weight of the population.

During this operation, a conservative estimate placed the total shad kill at 420,000 pounds. Although this experimental project did not reduce the population to limits which might be considered optimum for study of the effects of shad reduction upon remaining fish populations, it did, in one day destroy nearly three times the kill accomplished by nine months of haul seining.

The selective poisoning technique might be considered as yet in its infancy but it offers a great deal of promise of developing into a fisheries management tool of major importance. END.



The Commission's spray plane was to be used for distributing the poison but after the first run, the weather socked in, making flying impossible.



The principal kill during the Trafford operation was mainly among the smaller gizzard shad. The concentration of poison required to make an effective kill of larger shad is close to that lethal to bass.

Under a glowering sky, one of the Commission's air boats lays out a swath of rotenone.

CHAIN PICKEREL

(Continued from Page 13)

erel. Small weedless spoons fished on fly rod, spinning tackle, or light bait casting gear will often take pickerel from weedy waters which are difficult or impossible to work with other types of artificials.

Trolling along the edge of weed beds with spoons and plugs is often effective. Whatever type of gear you choose, you will find the pickerel eager to do battle.

In the February issue of *Florida Wildlife* appeared an announcement of the formation of the "Florida Big Pike Club." To be eligible for a Big Pike Certificate, the angler must take from Florida waters a chain pickerel of 4 pounds or more in weight. The purpose of the "club" is to aid the Commission in compiling information regarding the size and distribution of the chain pickerel within the state. The heaviest fish for which a certificate has been issued thus far is a 5½ pounder which was 27 inches in total length. This pickerel was taken in Lake Talquin on January 19, 1956 by T. J. Peacock, Jr., of Quincy, Fla.

There have been reports of Florida pickerel weighing eight pounds, within a pound of the world's record 9-pounder. Chances are excellent that lurking somewhere in the waters of the Sunshine State is a world's record chain pickerel. Someone will catch him, why not you? END.

JUMPING CATFISH

(Continued from Page 16)

them out. Then sear the catfish chunks in the hot pork fat. Remove them. Slice four or five white onions and two or three green bell peppers, and fry them in the salt pork grease until the onions begin to curl brown. Take half a bottle of catsup — or half a jar of chili sauce—or a can of tomatoes. Mix it with an equal amount of water and pour it on the frying onions and pepper slices. Let this sauce bubble in a separate container. A big iron skillet is ideal for these preliminaries. Peel and cut six to eight good sized white potatoes into inch-cube chunks.

You are now ready to Build the Stew.

Sprinkle about half the browned pork cubes at random over the bottom of the Dutch oven. One of those self-contained electric oven appliances with a "slow-heat" control will work equally well. Lay on a layer of seared catfish chunks. Add two or three handfuls of potatoes. Thinning the sauce with a couple of glasses of water, spoon it over the fish and potatoes. Sprinkle on the rest of the pork cubes. Add another layer of catfish, potatoes and the rest of the sauce. Add water until it reaches the edges, but does not cover the last layer of catfish. Salt and black pepper to taste. Tenderly place a couple of dozen bay leaves upon the top, and slow-cook for about two hours. Not "pop and sputter" boiling. Just a slow, flavor-spreading simmer.

The catfish, in my humble opinion, is the most overlooked and under rated fresh water resource in Florida today. Bill, who is a former Peoria, Ill., newspaper fishing writer and radio outdoor columnist, tells me: "There are fellows back where I come from who would give their right eyeballs to hook channel kitties like you and I have been catching out of C-23."

"Because they jump?"

"Not necessarily. That's an added attraction." He broke into a slow grin. "To tell you the truth," he said, "I'm like you. I've caught them all sizes and kinds—but I've never seen one jump, except on C-23."

That made me feel a little better.

Catfish? Sure, like I told Bill, I've caught them all my life. They *tugged,* they *pulled,* they *rassled.* Catfish don't jump, you know. Oh, occasionally, one will strike a plug. But, for serious catfishing—and I go in for that, occasionally—a fellow uses a trotline, or a bunch of branch hooks, or jug-fishes. . . .

Shucks, you can even use a cane pole on them, if you want to. . . . How much fun I've had, in the cool of the day, easing out yellow bullheads, black bullheads, blue cats, willow cats and marble cats in dark pools from under fallen trees at the head of the South Fork . . . or, with a spinning rod, catching that particularly appropriate frying size channel cat—half a pound to a pound and a half—from the center of St. Lucie Canal. Cast 10 feet short and nary a bite. Cast 10 feet over and chew your nails. But, locate that exact latitude where the channel cats are feeding, put the worm or minnow (better live, but still good dead) fresh water shrimp, soft crawdad or peeled hard crawdad tail out in that particular territory—and you're in business.

The fork-tails are clannish, usually run all about of a size. If you're annoyed by six-inchers, better move on and find a new location. If you catch a couple in the pound class, stick with it. You'll probably wind up with a dozen or fifteen, just right for a fish fry. Score them to the bone at one-inch intervals, dust with corn meal (water ground, preferred) pepper and salt. Handy trick: put the meal in a brown paper bag and shake the fish in it. Fry to a golden brown in clean, pure lard or shortening.

Leave on the fins and tails. They are crunchy, delicious morsels.

We serve our Great Jumping Catfish Stew in soup plates. Napkins knotted around the neck. Black coffee on the side. Nothing else. It's right fittin' and fillin', too. Bill and his wife, my wife and I and our youngsters can polish off an 11-pounder at a sitting. Every bite is flavor-filled.

"It's the slow-cooking does it," Bill commented once. "I bet it would be even better on the second day."

I agreed. I still agree. But I don't know. It's sort of like whether a fellow will ever get a picture of a jumping channel cat. Both deals are possible, but improbable. There's never been a spoonful left for any second try. END.

FISHING

(Continued from Page 7)

someone dumping a load of rock in the water. All at once, the water boils with feeding fish. The noise mounts until you find it hard to believe it is fish on the feed.

You arch out a cast and start the plug back, making the spray fly as you pop it. A fish strikes heavily, and your rod bends almost double as you peer into the moonlight, trying to decide which of the many splashing, thrashing fish you have hooked. After a brisk battle—and if you're lucky—you slip the net under a still struggling fish and hold net and all up in the moonlight. Through the mesh, a 7 or 8 or, perhaps, 10 or 12 pound bass glistens wetly. You sit down suddenly, weak from the excitement. That's moonlight bass fishing in the springtime. END.

The "sheath" of an orchid plant is the flat, blade-shaped growth on the bulb that protects the flower buds until they are well developed.

The shell lily from Ceylon is a member of the ginger family, and the leaves have a strong, spicy odor when crushed.

JUMP AT THE CHANCE!

THE NEXT 5 ISSUES OF

Salt Water Sportsman

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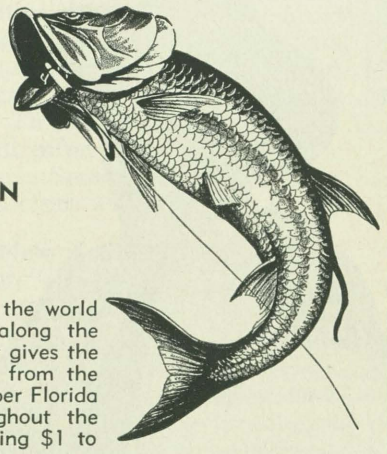

Salt Water Sportsman is the only magazine in the world devoted 100% to salt water sport fishing along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Published monthly, it gives the latest on where to, when to and how to fish from the Maritimes to the Bahamas. The special December Florida issue covers marine angling in detail throughout the state. Start receiving your copies now by sending $1 to

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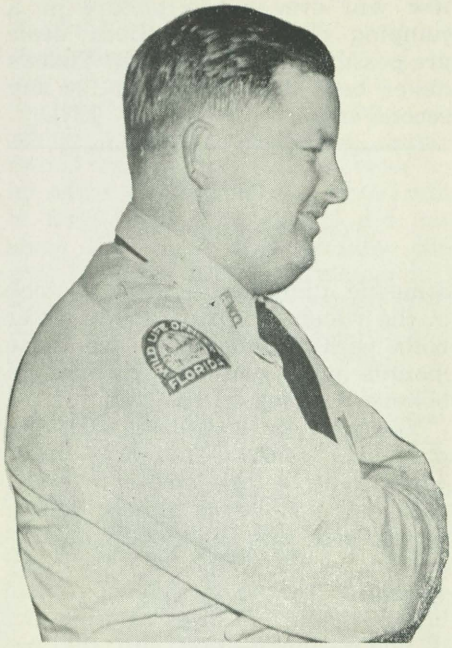

LOTHAIR "LOKE" CHESTER
Northwest Florida Region

Wildlife Officer Lothair "Loke" Chester has served with the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission for well over 12 years, having been employed by the enforcement division since June 1, 1943.

He and Mrs. Chester, the former Ruby Evans, make their home near Telogia in Liberty County, Loke's area of service.

In addition to his regular duties of game and fish law enforcement, Loke handles the annual Apalachicola hunt and the special bear hunt held each October in the Liberty County section of the Apalachicola National Forest.

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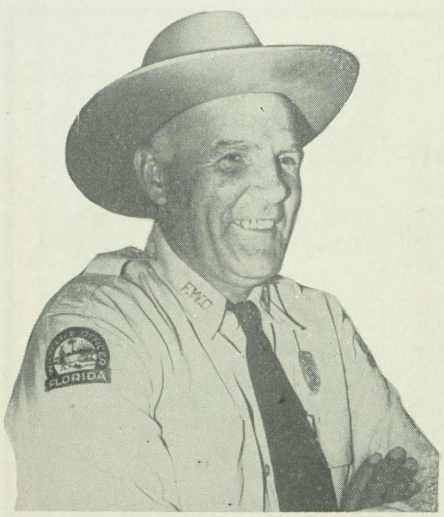

WALLACE BRAXTON KIRBY
Northwest Florida Region

Wildlife Officer Wallace "Sundown" Kirby has been employed by the Commission since October 1950. Before accepting his present position as Wildlife Officer, Mr. Kirby farmed in Columbia County where he has lived all of his life. His present area of service is located in Columbia and Baker Counties.

The Kirbys have two children; a son, Bobby, and a daughter, Pammie.

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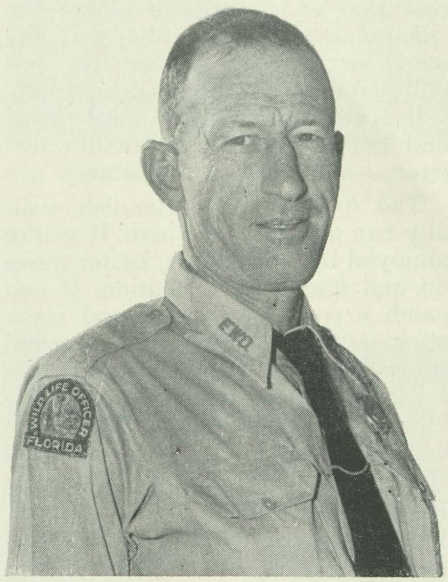


JAMES OLIVER HUDSON
Central Florida Region

James Oliver Hudson has been employed as a Wildlife Officer with the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission since March 18, 1946.

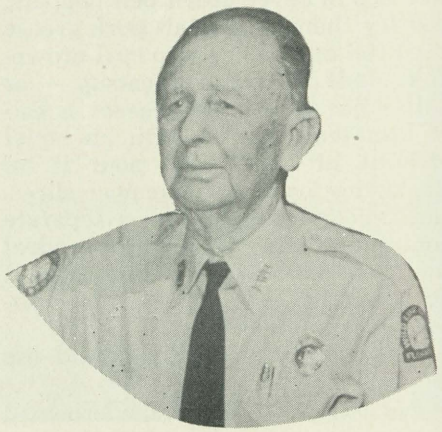
"Buster" and Mrs. Hudson, the former Willie Dell Hamilton, make their home in Yankeetown. Mr. Hudson has lived most of his life in Levy County which is his present area of service with the Commission.

During World War II Mr. Hudson served in the Army Engineer Corps, spending some 42 months of overseas duty in the E.T.O. and in the Aleutian Islands.

☆ ☆ ☆

SPRING GOBBLER SEASON

Florida hunters who did not kill their season's bag limit of three turkeys will have another chance at the wily gobblers during a special 9-day spring gobbler season. The Third Conservation District of Northwest Florida will be open for gobblers only from March 31 through April 8. Hunters who have already taken their bag limit will not be allowed to hunt. All turkeys taken must be tagged just as in the regular season.



ROBERT NUELL COOK
South Florida Region

For more than 10 years, Robert Nuell Cook has been with the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission as a Wildlife Officer.

Prior to his employment with the Commission, Bob was self employed as a boat builder.

Bob and Mrs. Cook, the former Josie Mae Mund, live on Route No. 2, Manatee. The couple have two sons, Edward, 40, and Robert, 19, and seven daughters, Alpha, 38; Mrs. R. W. Maddox, 36; Mrs. R. S. Pringel, 32; Mrs. N. S. Wills, 30; Mrs. K. D. Dobbins, 28; Mrs. E. S. Fogarty, 25; and Mrs. J. R. Booker, 23.

Bob's "beat" is located in Manatee County in the South Florida Region.

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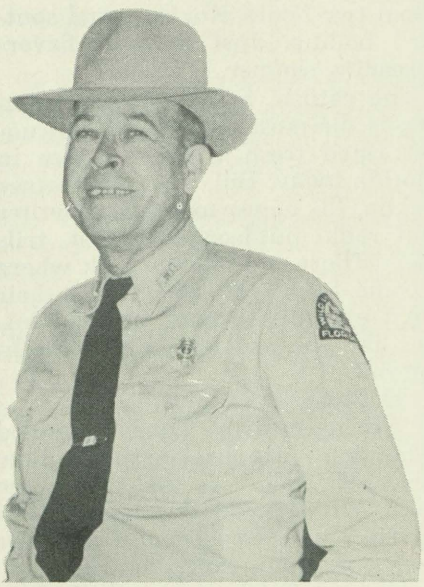


LEE DUGGAR
Northwest Florida Region

Wildlife Officer Lee Duggar has been with the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission since September 1, 1945. He is 51 years of age.

Lee and Mrs. Duggar, the former Bernice Strickland, live near Bristol in Liberty County. The couple have one daughter, Mrs. Iris Eubanks.

AIRPORTS TO FILTER DEATH-TRAPS

SONGBIRDS MIGRATING south next fall are going to have a safer passage. Those powerful vertical light beams in the vicinity of airports which have caused thousands of birds to crash to earth are going to be filtered or turned off during the migrating period.

Interior Secretary McKay announced the Air Force, the Weather Bureau and numerous other groups are co-operating.

The high-powered vertical light beams are used to determine the ceiling, or range of visibility and are known as ceilometers.

"The bird toll at ceilometer stations in recent years has been alarming," MrKay said in a news release.

"As many as 25,000 birds have perished in a single night at a single airfield."

McKay said it is not known just what effect the light beam has on birds in flight, but added:

"It is presumed that the birds are temporarily blinded by the light or that their sense of direction is blunted in some way. The effect is that the birds crash into the ground while going at a high rate of speed and are killed. For some unknown reason bird losses occur only in the fall on southward flights."

Filters have been developed which retain the visible light of the ceilometer and permit only the ultraviolet or "black light" to go upwards for ceiling measurement. This black light has no effect on the migrating birds.

In some places unfiltered beams will be turned off when birds are in flight provided this can be done without endangering air travel. END.

JR. CONSERVATIONIST

(Continued from Page 5)

Mr. James Reed
205 West Adams Street
Ocala, Florida
Mr. Robert Revels
Post Office Box 1392
Lakeland, Florida
Mr. Ralph Voss
Post Office Box 908
Lake City, Florida
Mr. Frank Nowak
Post Office Box 877
Okeechobee, Florida

These are the men in your respective areas who have direct contact with you. Please cooperate with them and make this a bigger and better program.

And for those of you who may have forgotten, and for those who did not know, the new headquarters office of the Youth Conservation Program is:

205 West Adams Street
Ocala, Florida

Summer Camp Reservation-Applications

A new form of reservation-applications to next summer's camp session has been drawn and printed. These applications will be sent out the latter part of this month (January) to those who participated in 1954 and 1955 at Camp Eaton. The important thing to remember about these applications is to talk it over with Mom and Dad and find out if you can go, and then send the applications right off to us. That way, we can put your name down and reserve a week for you. There are so many who want to come, now that the camp is completed, we must make certain that there will be sufficient room for all. So get your reservation in as soon as you get the okay from Mother or Daddy. If those of you who answered the questionnaire and sent them in send your reservation-applications in just as fast, this office will have all the necessary information in no time flat. How about it, gang?

Our New Rank System

You members of clubs in the League, don't forget—just as soon as you have reached 10,000 points send that information in to this office and officially become a Ranger. If you have 30,000 points, let us know; you are entitled to be called a Forester. Remember, your points are accumulative. Keep on doing your duty towards conservation, and in no time you will have rewarded yourself with some timely promotions.

'But I tell you I don't want any barracuda!"

Board of Directors Meeting

The Junior Conservation Club League will meet this month in Panama City where many important issues governing the League and camp will be transacted.

The meeting for the board will be the last outside meeting until they convene at the Annual Meeting to be held at Lake Eaton this summer.

The dates for this three-day meeting to be held in Panama City have not at this writing been decided. It will in all probability be held during the National Wildlife Week, and in conjunction with the annual installation of the new officers of the Bay County All Girls Junior Conservation Club. They are the acting hostesses for the Board of Directors. Also attending the meeting will be our Chief of Information and Education, Mr. Bob Dahne; Mr. Wally Hughes, Chief of Audio-Visual Department, and Mr. Jim Reed, Mr. Frank Nowak, Mr. Bob Revels, Mr. Ed Timmons, and Mr. Ralph Voss —all information and education officers. Senior counselors from several clubs will also be in attendance.

A New Year—1956

We are now in our fifth year in the Youth Conservation Education Program. Let's all every effort to make this the best year yet. Let's do everything possible to make our clubs strong, and to function for the real purpose of conservation—conserving our natural resources. Let's all do our share in making this year the best program anywhere. Let it be a real banner year. END.

Resolutions of a Conservationist

From the Michigan State University Conservation Bulletin

1. I resolve to make every effort to spread the true meaning of conservation—the wise use now and forever of all our natural resources, the land and the water and the products and services rendered by them.

2. I will urge upon all who would listen the vital importance of the natural resources to the well-being of mankind. Without a bounteous supply of these resources forever, man cannot prosper.

3. I resolve to do everything in my power to encourage the plan-wise development of my communities so that each land and water use will be so placed that it will enhance the tangible and intangible values in the community with the least curtailment of other land and water uses in the community.

4. I resolve to point out the necessity of conserving all of the soils so that their productivity will not be impaired to the disadvantage of future generations.

5. I resolve that water, *probably the scarcest resource,* should be so conserved that it will be available repeatedly in unpolluted form for the many uses to which it is put—domestic, industrial, recreational, fish and farm.

6. I resolve to encourage the proper management and protection of the forest so that it may supply a bounteous crop of trees for wood so necessary to civilized man.

7. I resolve to give every support to the movement to reserve sufficient land and water so that our growing population may be able to enjoy for all time our God-given out-of-doors.

8. I resolve that I will encourage such land use which will, where feasible, provide a plentiful supply of fish and wildlife for the vacationist, fisherman, and the hunter.

9. I finally resolve to urge upon all the utmost care in the use of our mineral resources so that the limited supply will not soon be exhausted, but be available for many, many generations to come.

END.

PANFISHING PARADISE

(Continued from Page 11)

stream or a lake means a bedding spot.

But if you or your companions lack this desirable bream locating skill, try a sure-fire method divulged by expert Carlos Vinson—"dangle a worm until you catch a small bluegill. Then, instead of slipping him back in the water as you normally would, hook him lightly through a lip and cut off about four feet of your line or leader. On the free end fasten a cork or small plastic bobber and plunk the entire rig, small bream and all, into the water. Watch the bobber! It's dimes to doughnuts the little fellow will lead you to a good bream bed in his anxiety to get back among his kind. Follow the bobber and retrieve it when it stops. Release the undersized pilot and go after his big brothers on the spot."

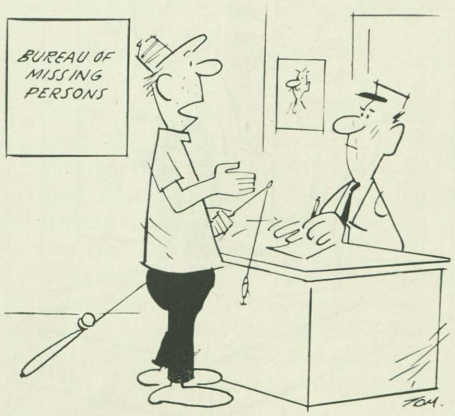
For speckled perch, a fish with a so-called "paper" mouth and some 56 correct or colloquial names, use small minnows, worms, freshwater shrimp, insect larvae and other natural baits. For still fishing, rig live minnows on either a No. 4 or No. 6 hook, by piercing the skin just behind the dorsal fin. For casting, dead minnows, properly rigged for lifelike action, can be used.

In the artificial listings, try size 0 spinners and flies tied on No. 6 hooks, fished with a slow but activated retrieve. Also try ⅛ ounce jigs and ¼ ounce spinners. Work them slowly from the end of a four pound test leader. Also experiment with midget casting lures and tiny spoons. For trolling, tie on a size No. 1 Upperman bucktail. A Wright & McGill "Little Miracle" minnow, or similar small bodied bait with a diving lip, trolled or cast can also be used to locate feeding speckled perch.

Good fishing spots are Lakes Wilmington, Griffin, Beauclair and Fisheating Creek. Best months are probably March and April.

The warmouth, usually found in areas of abundant protective cover, is a spunky fish; hits hard, and likes a moving bait. Small minnows and small crayfish are favored natural foods. Try fly and spinner combinations and other small artificials on a 3 1/3 to four ounce fly rod. Small streamer flies are exceptionally good.

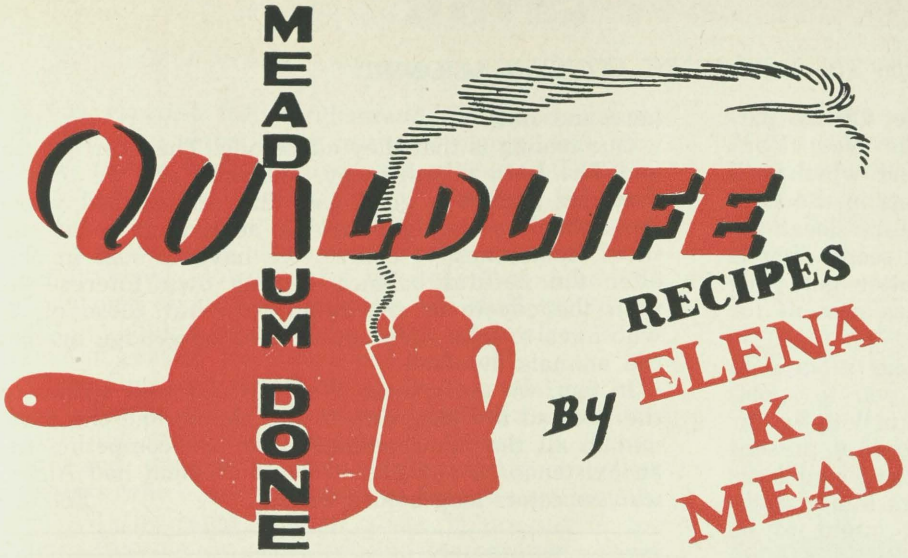
Whether you seek bream, crappies, speckled perch or any of a half a dozen sporty panfish species, you'll find plenty of panfishing sport in Florida. To those who have already tried their luck, it's a panfishing paradise! END.



"It's hard to say when she left. The bass have been hitting good and I . . ."

The following pamphlets and booklets are available without charge from the Information - Education Division, Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Florida:

Florida Wild Turkey
The Ocala Deer Herd
Florida's Game Animals
Fish Florida's Fresh Waters
Snakes Can Kill
Biennial Report
Summary—Fishing Regulations
Summary—Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Regulations
Identifying Florida Bass
Story of American Waterfowl
Reprints—Florida Wildlife Scrapbook
Florida's Wildlife Management Areas
Lake and Stream Survey (Leon and Gadsden Counties)
Status, Movement, a nd Management of the Mourning Dove
Ten Commandments of Safety
World Inside the Managed Forest
Way Down Upon the Suwannee River
Conservation Manual for Civic Groups



THERE IS AN OLD saying that nothing makes the time go so fast as owing a bill. We'd like to paraphrase that a little and add—nothing speeds the clock like writing a monthly magazine column.

Magazine editors being an orderly sort of men, insist on having copy a couple of months in advance, so here we are—with our back up against the heater in the coldest January weather we've seen in Florida in many a year—trying to figure out what would taste particularly good to you gourmets in the month of March.

While the winds whistle around the corners of the house, we keep thinking of that old quotation of, "Home is the hunter—". Tired, cold, and hungry, we might add—if he's been out trying his luck in field or stream.

So we're going to give you a few succulent dishes, mostly involving seafood, which should satisfy his appetite, lift his spirits, and warm his innards. Let's label 'em, "Nice-to-come-home-to" recipes. And if it's warmed up by March, just file them away for that inevitable cold snap next winter.

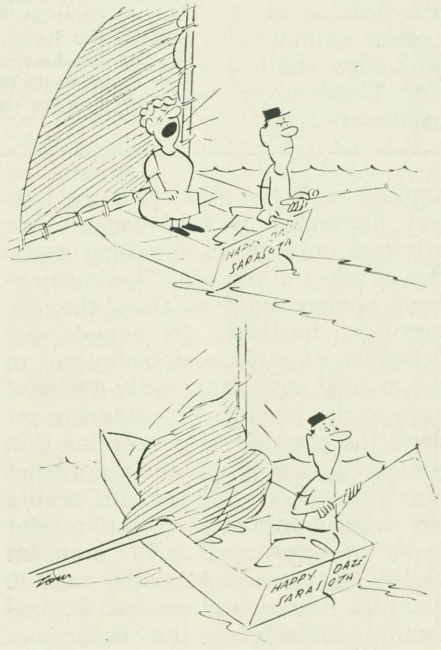
ESCALLOPED OYSTER GUMBO

1 pint oysters in natural liquor
2 cups rolled cracker crumbs
5 or 6 tablespoonsful butter
1 can condensed chicken gumbo soup

This is a simple dish which may be made up several hours ahead of time and slipped into the oven at the last minute. Butter a baking dish. Sprinkle about a half-cup of the crumbs in the bottom of the dish (or casserole) and arrange a layer of oysters over the crumbs, using about half of the liquor, too.

Cover with about a cup of the gumbo soup. Shake about a cup of the crumbs that are left over the oysters and gumbo and dot with butter.

Add another layer of the oysters and the remainder of their liquor, and the remainder of the chicken gumbo soup. Sprinkle the remaining crumbs over top, dot with butter, and bake for an hour in a moderate oven (375 degrees). Will serve five or six ordinary folks or three or four hungry ones.



FISH A LA PROVENCALE

This is baked fish with a flourish, the flourish being borrowed from our South American neighbors who influence a lot of Florida cookery these days.

Any medium-sized fish
2 carrots sliced
2 medium-sized onions
3 cloves garlic
1 cup olive oil
Juice of 2 lemons
Chopped parsley and bay leaves
Salt and pepper

Dress fish clean and leave whole. Score deeply on both sides. Place in dish large enough to accommodate, and marinate with mixture made of sliced carrots, onions, chopped parsley, bay leaves, mashed garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and salt and pepper.

Let fish stand for several hours in mixture, marinating it frequently. Keep refrigerated, of course. Then remove fish from mixture, place in baking dish or pan, and bake 45 minutes in a moderate oven, basting frequently with cooking wine and a lot of butter.

To the marinade add half a bottle of cooking wine and dash of cayenne. Cook until vegetables are tender, strain, and pour over fish. Garnish with your favorite garnishes, or use lemon slices and parsley. Good with wild rice.

BAKED SHRIMP

2 pounds cooked shrimp
1 can condensed tomato soup
1 can condensed vegetable soup
1 small onion chopped
Biscuit dough, and seasoning

This is another quickie that gives the cook a full day for her activities—and still gives husband and guests a hot appetizing main dish.

Prepare the shrimp the day before by plunging into a kettle of salted hot water into which five or six lemons have been sliced. Boil 20 minutes, cool, remove heads, black veins, and shells. Refrigerate.

This brings us up to today's recipe.

Now: Chop shrimp coarsley. Add both cans of soup and, finely chopped onion. Salt to taste—and a dash of cayenne. Season with butter or chicken fat.

Pour into a buttered baking dish, cover with a layer of rich biscuit dough, and bake in moderate oven until biscuit dough is nicely browned.

Good in either hot or cold weather—come to think of it. END.

MOON STOCKING

Lifted From The NEW YORK CONSERVATIONIST

We see that The Moon is for sale. Choice parcels, anyway. According to *The New York Times* there's a concern on Long Island which will give you a quitclaim deed to selected lots in the Crater of Copernicus (a highly desirable lunar location) and all they cost you is $1 per acre. It seems there's a real Moon Boom under way, so better get your order in early. What a dandy Christmas present for Mother-in-law.

Or for your sporting friends, because it says in the fine print that your deed entitles you to sporting privileges in areas adjacent to your lot. So far as we know there is no life on The Moon at present on account of it's really chilly up there and you have to bring your own oxygen. But those are minor problems that any good real estate agent ought to be able to solve by moving in a suitable climate, moving The Moon, or some other simple device. The *real* problem is going to come when we have to decide what kind of life to get started up there.

The controversy over the Lunar Stocking Project is going to be a dilly.

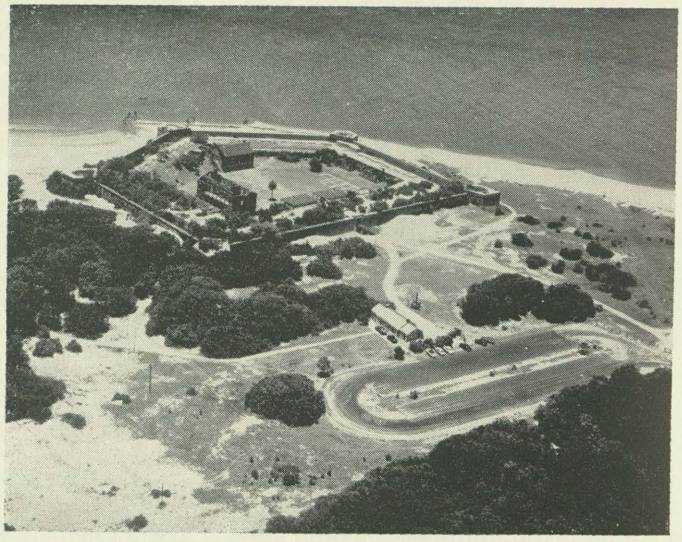
Shall we have the fox? No, he might eat a pheasant. The coyote? No, he might eat a deer or a hare and so might the bobcat—so no bobcats either. No otters or loons, (they eat trout) and no beavers because they foul up a lot of trout streams. The mink and the 'coon would probably have to be blackballed because when streams are low they catch a lot more fish than fishermen do. And suppose you plan to have a garden on your lunar lot; you won't want any deer or rabbits or woodchucks around. If you're going to raise chickens, no weasels. And how about the squirrels that raid birds' nests, the mice that eat holes in blankets, the bears that raid camps, the porcupines that kill trees, the hawks and owls that hunt night and day for almost anything they can catch—how many of them will make the grade?

Sure we can cross that bridge to The Moon when we come to it. But here's a problem that brings The Moon right down to Earth: Assuming the dominance of Man in the Animal Kingdom, what other animals is he going to permit to live in his realm? How shall they live, how many if any, and where? Those are questions that bedevil Conservation Departments right here and now.

Our feeling is that they *all* belong. The Lord giveth and The Lord taketh away, and who are we to say that this animal is good and that animal bad when the animal is simply behaving according to his nature? Sometimes, of course, we have to step in and alter the natural balance in our own interest—as with the coyote or the rabid fox—but those of us who have to take such action hold no grudge against the animals involved.

In fact, we go farther: We send our best wishes to the fox *and* the pheasant, to the coyote *and* the hare, and to all the other animals that are competing for an existence on our planet. Most of them had American ancestors long before we did. END.

VISIT FLORIDA'S STATE PARKS



Fort Clinch is located on the tip of Amelia Island, the most northeasterly point in Florida. The fort was built prior to the War Between the States. It was supplied with modern armament during the Spanish-American War and saw limited service during World War I and World War II. Guided tours of the fort, bathing, fishing, and camping are visitor attractions at Fort Clinch State Park located just north of Fernandina.

COMPLEAT ANGLER

(Continued from Page 30)

formed me sadly that his fingers were all stiff and sore from counting a semi-trailer load of tens and twenties. Furthermore, he would probably have to take on the chore of counting this daily shipment, as help was getting pretty scarce and apprentices were no longer interested in the one percent that the job paid.

The upshot was that George no longer had any time to fish, to visit the seafood bazaar, or even to send a courier thereto for mullets.

As I brushed away a tear, I promised to send George a can of Jack Mackerel, *(Scomberomorus Cavalla)*.

It is saddening to realize that in angling, as in the other arts, the loftiest pinnacles of achievement are attained only at an appalling sacrifice of good fellowship. The journeyman angler, no less than the apprentice, hesitates to expose deficiencies of style and technique to the critical, and supposedly derisive, gaze of the master. This timidity reflects the popular misconception that the ace angler consistently outfishes his less gifted fellows. In reality the true dominance of the master is better expressed in his superior ability accurately to parse and to diagram the complex and diverse factors underlying the failure of game fish to rise. On more than one occasion I have watched a footless beginner violate every canon of the art, only to amass a No. 3 tubful of pompano, *(Trachinotus Carolinus)*, or lookdown, *(Selene Vomer)*, while I myself, employing every strategem known to science, could gain no better than an economy-size horsecollar. At such a time, I have withheld the harsh words of reproof and have even consented graciously to accepting the entire catch, thus relieving the unlettered tyro of the menial and onerous task of preparing the catch for the pan. Surely, this was not the act of an aloof and proud perfectionist.

Let the aspiring novice, dreaming of the heights, ponder well the moral of our tale:

The paths of glory abide for none but the lonely heart. END.

AUTUMN COLORS

Reprinted From The MICHIGAN CONSERVATION

FEW PERSONS fully understand the color changes that take place in the leaves of plants. And, why should people be concerned with processes that they are ill prepared to comprehend? Possibly the Jack Frost legend is just as meaningful to the average person as a technical discussion of the chemical reactions involved. However, for the benefit of those who are curious about such subjects, we shall try to explain, as simply as possible, what takes place when leaves of certain trees turn red and gold.

Clear days and frosty nights are essential for brilliant colors in the fall. These two factors cause chlorophyll, the green substance in the leaves, to disintegrate and disappear. The highly refractive yellow pigments which are produced in leaves may then be seen. At the same time, if sugar is present in the leaves, freezing or near freezing temperatures favor the formation of a red pigment. So, trees and shrubs whose leaves are rich in sugar commonly turn red instead of yellow if weather favors a marked color change. If, however, little sugar is present in the leaves when frost occurs, as sometimes happens, the orange or yellow may predominate.

In those trees that are rich in tannin—oaks and beeches—the red and yellow pigments may be masked by brown. The copper color, peculiar to the autumn leaves of beech, is the result of a mixture of brown and yellow pigments. The presence of tannin in oak leaves is usually less apparent because red pigments generally obscure the brown. However, when red pigments fail to develop, oak leaves directly change from green to brown.

Since the production of most of the red and some of the yellow pigment is dependent upon the amount of sugar in a leaf, clear days and early frosts favor brilliant leaves. Regions such as the Lake States and New England have ideal climates for vivid autumn foliage. END.

Years to grow, minutes to destroy. A swamp site was no protection for these cypress trees when fire followed months of drought last spring. Across the top of the state and down the peninsula flames flared and left destruction like this. Timberland owners, forest products manufacturers, and conservation men fear a recurrence this year and plead for care with fire, and severe public treatment for malicious firebugs. (Photo by Russ Yoder.)

TVA FISHERMAN

(Continued from Page 27)

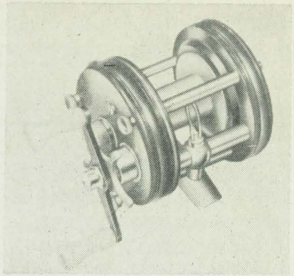
tion. Seconds later I eased off the bow in the rod. Nothing happened. Missed the fish and hung a snag. I peeled out line from the reel and whipped the rod tip in the manner of a frustrated five-year-old. All at once things did happen. The end of the line was cutting water in a bee line for the boat. Ten thumbs and no fingers tried desperately to retrieve the line so foolishly paid out. I got most of the line when he passed under the boat four feet down. He was a determined largemouth, obviously disgusted at the amateurish way I had tugged and horsed away at him. Willing to do battle with a skilled mastercraftsman, he had tangled with an apprentice. My rod tip warped around the gunwales and Mr. Big Mouth, in a belligerent nose down power dive, kept going. I cussed him out for hitting me off balance. What a sneaky way for a bass to hit a bug. I guessed his weight in the six pound class but in the telling later, to my friends in the Tennessee Valley, he grew to maybe 10, 12 pounds. Black bass grow fast in Florida waters.

I reviewed the scene of action. The bass had hit the bug on the sunny unshaded bank. I had been fishing the orthodox system, casting to the shaded shoreline. Maybe these bass were not in an orthodox mood. I fished the wrong side of the stream with the sun generally at my back. Surely the bass could see me and spook. They didn't. Maybe that big one passed the word that an amateur from Tennessee was passing by. The venerable gentlemen, Messrs. Peace and Contentment, deserted me at this point and for the next hour, the vibrant young men of the river, Mr. Action and Mr. Excitement, joined me. During that period my stringer accumulated six bass. They almost appeared to represent successive spawning seasons, like children of a Tennessee mountain family. According to my fisherman's DeLiar they weighed: one-half, one, two, three, three and three-quarters, and four pounds three ounces. All takers in my Tennessee book. I had lost and missed as many more and my one remaining popping bug was beat to a frayed frazzle.

The sun was high and the cooling breeze died away. Thunderheads piled up in the Florida fashion for the season. Drifting past a shallow slough, a picture was presented to me which typifies the Florida backwoods scene. The type of thing which grows on you and makes you love the back country of this sunny peninsula. None of the glitter and carnival of the Gold Coast here. A Brahma bull with five scrub cows languished belly deep in the quiet sluggish offshoot of the river. Gar rolled within feet of the cattle. A half submerged cypress log was shared by three piggy-back turtles and a fat cottonmouth. An egret walked the shallows intent on getting his lunch. A picture of the harmony of nature.

I think I realized then, why a man will drive 800 miles from Tennessee to Florida when he is surrounded by the famed TVA lakes. The TVA waters are beautiful and we marvel at the wonders man has brought with the massive concrete dams. In the hinterlands of Florida there is evidence all around of a hand, greater and more creative than man's. This is the land Osceola fought for. Can't say I blame him. END.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE FIELD TESTS AND TELLS



THERE is a certain immeasurable degree of personal pride and satisfaction in owning a truly quality product, especially a major item of fishing tackle or hunting equipment. The imported "Ambassadeur #5000" bait casting reel, made by AB Urfabriken, a Swedish firm, is such a product. Having tested it on more than sixteen different species of Florida fish, from bass to tarpon, FWFT&T can recommend the "Ambassadeur" with confidence.

It is not at all surprising that a Swedish-manufactured reel should appear on the American market and challenge some of our best known domestic models to engage in comparative angling performance tests. The Swedish people are known the world over as extremely capable craftsmen; some of the finest quality precision instruments, used by American and foreign industry and various medical and scientific fields, are of Swedish manufacture. However, few persons are conscious of the fact that the Swedish people, like Floridians, are also enthusiastic anglers—similarly enjoying close residence to countless lakes and rivers and 1,563 miles of coastline.

It is at Svangsta, on the banks of the turbulent Morrum river, noted for its salmon runs, that the "Ambassadeur #5000" is made, along with models of greater line storage capacity. The mechanical genius of water and clockmakers, who were also ardent anglers, combined to create the Swedish idea of the perfect bait casting reel, and the Morrum river salmon and the pike, perch and trout of the Baltic Sea furnished ample opportunities to field test and perfect first models.

Salmon up to fifty pounds were taken; the same models were immersed in salt water for as long as two years without subsequent mechanical failure. Significantly, 94% of the expert anglers competing in Sweden's annual national fishing tournament now use Urfabriken-made reels. Demand has brought about the addition of larger salt water models, numbers 6000 and 7000, with greater line storage capacity than that of the popular #5000 "Ambassadeur" — 220 yards of size .016 monofilament line; 150 yards of .020 monofilament, or 120 yards of 18-lb. test braided line.

The Swedish designers claim that the "Ambassadeur" is the first and only bait casting reel in the world with completely free-running spool in combination with level wind and patented centrifugal brake for backlash-proof action. They point out, as FWFT&T found, that the "Ambassadeur" not only has the advantages of a multiplying-type reel but also those of a spinning reel—yet inspection and tests will show that the Swedish product's construction is relatively simple. Parts are hard chrome and stainless steel, with the exterior components maroon anodized for added eye appeal.

The "Ambassadeur" is built in sections with quick take-down features and self-centering spool bushings, easily interchangeable without tools. Gears and bushings are of nylon, with provided convenient outside oiling feature.

The reel's spool is quickly disengaged by merely pressing a button on the headplate, regardless of the position of the reel handle at the time. When reeling in, the spool automatically engages with other working parts. FWFT&T was unable to determine, or deliberately bring about, any undesirable "grabbing" or slipping when engaging the spool.

The handle section is equipped with a smooth and uniform star drag, which can be adjusted for different braking tensions. The star drag also has an anti-reverse click.

The spool recesses in the tail-plates have lineguard-edges to prevent fine diameter monofilament line from penetrating between spool flange and tail plate and being cut off.

One of the nicest features about the "Ambassadeur" is its level wind system, the carriage screw being capsuled into a hard chrome plated tube to protect it against dirt.

In the headplate, one finds an anti-backlash centrifugal brake that prevents rising of the line during the top revolutions of the spool, thus eliminating backlashes. In the left spoolcap, a mechanical brake, equipped with a graduated scale, enables the angler to make easy adjustment of the reel for various weights of lures.

The "Ambassadeur #6000" has the same features as the No. 5000 except for the spool being wider and the handle having one grip-knob instead of two.

All of the listings come packed in 1/8" thick soft cowhide, hand-sewn cases also holding oil tube, spare parts and screwdriver (for further disassembly of easily detached major sections).

The model #5000 retails for $47.00; the #6000, the favorite Swedish surf casting model, is $50.00; larger models on special order. Julian A. Wesseler, of Scarsdale, New York, is sole importer and currently has retail trade outlets throughout the United States. Trade orders are honored at standard discounts.

WHEN spin fishing first threw its blanketing cloak of popularity over Florida, initial rod selections were invariably long—often nine or ten feet—and patterned after the long and heavy European spinning rods. Reels invoked to service were of any make, size and weight that happened to strike an angler's fancy or available for immediate delivery during the first peak demand for spinning tackle.

But Florida fishermen, experimenters at heart, soon found that they could improve on the European rod designs and the Old Countries' accepted spinning techniques.

Excessive buggy-whip action in rods was reduced by making rods shorter and stiffer; the handhold areas were made shorter to give better casting leverage and to cut down rod weight, and line guides were improved. More thought and time began to attend reel selections, too. The net result was a marked improvement in spinning tackle and the achievement of matched, balanced outfits. Today, anglers know that the best and most enjoyable spin fishing tackle is that which is carefully matched in respect to rod and reel balance and line and lure weight. But assembling matched tackle is not always easy for beginners; too often they end up with one or more major components at working odds with the other chosen tackle items.

Cognizant of the tackle selection problem many anglers face, the Charles Garcia firm, importers of the French-made Mitchell line of spinning reels and makers of American designed rods and spin fishing accessories, have developed two complete spin fishing kits, catalog numbers 300RK and 304RK, that enable anglers to acquire matched tackle from a single purchase.

Best of the two, from FWFT&T's viewpoint, is the #300RK, featuring a Mitchell No. 475 "Companion" rod, 6½ ft. long, of hollow fiberglas, available in light or medium action; a Garcia-Mitchell spinning reel with two different line-size capacity spools; Platyl line, swivels, selected spinning lures and needed small accessories.

The rod itself is of a size most useful for all around fishing in both fresh and salt water and its sliding reel seat is anodized against corrosion. Significantly, the Mitchell product comes pretty close to meeting the specifications recommended by Phil Francis, a famous Florida spin fisherman and author of "Florida Fish and Fishing." For all around use, Francis—an expert FWFT&T respectfully salutes as a superior authority on most fishing matters—advocates a hollow glass rod about 6½ feet long and weighing from four to four and one-half ounces.

The reel, with its two different line-size spools, combines with the rod to give a balanced outfit ideal for Florida black bass, trout, snook and small tarpon; for the landlock salmon, brook trout and brown trout of the New England States; for the steelheads and salmon of the Pacific Coast; cutthroats of the high Sierras, or the pike, bass and pickerel of the Central States. Close factory inspection and testing of finished product is probably the reason why Mitchell reels work so smoothly. FWFT&T was unable to find fault with the reel, used normally or deliberately abused.

The entire outfit expresses superb workmanship and thoughtful assembly of the various items. The only thing about the kit that FWFT&T does not particularly like is the use of agate instead of chrome-plated stainless steel guides on the rod. However, the genuine agate guides used are generously banded with protective metal, and in

tests by this department withstood a number of deliberate drops on a cement garage floor. Subjected to salt water immersion and then left uncleaned for a long period, the guides also did not corrode.

Price of the #300RK kit is $59.95—not overly priced if you stop and add up the retail prices of the represented items.

A less expensive, but a commendable, quality outfit is the #304RK kit. Extensive field tests by FWFT&T on Florida bonefish and snook, and on fresh water black bass, have verified claimed quality construction and durability. Primary difference between the higher-priced #300RK and the $37.50 priced #304RK is substitution of the Mitchell "Cap" model reel for the supreme-grade catalog listing. The chief reel component difference is that the "Cap" model is of simpler construction and utilizes fewer parts.

The #304RK outfit will handle spoons as fell as feather jigs admirably.

If you can afford the higher-priced #300RK, then fine! If you cannot, the #304RK will do the same jobs, and give you full value for each dollar represented in its $37.50 retail price.

THE outboard motor is now recognized as a necessary item to fishermen, hunters, campers and to persons who simply like to live afloat during available hours for recreation. But both motor performance and pride of ownership involves a minimum schedule of mechanical attention and motor overhaul, which wise outboard owners periodically give.

Despits the utmost care, however, the factory-applied finish on an outboard will gradually become scarred until an otherwise well kept and operating motor presents a disreputable, sad appearance. Heretofore, attempts at re-painting worst spots have usually resulted in giving a motor a patched top-coat. Paint colors adopted by various motor manufacturers have been extremely difficult to match and durability of applied touch-up paint has frequently been a problem; not all paints and lacquers will hold up when spotted with salt water spray.

In Plasti-Kote Self-spraying Marine Lacquer, outboard owners have a quick, low cost way to refinish or touch up faithful "kickers" without the finished job showing a patch work pattern, or having a short life span of service.

Easily applied Plasti-Kote Marine Lacquer was perfected by Plasti-Kote Company engineers for the express purpose of enabling outboard motor owners and small marine repair shops to match standard factory finishes in respect to color tone and durability, and to apply the new lacquer with professional results without resorting to costly spray painting equipment. In applying Plasti-Kote Marine Lacquer to an outboard motor, or other marine equipment, neither spray gun nor hand brush is needed; one simply presses a trigger on the top of the container-can to spray the quick-drying, aerosol-type lacquer.

To match the factory finish on your present marine equipment, merely ask for the Plasti-Kote marine lacquer bomb that is labeled to correspond with your specific need —Johnson Green, Evinrude Blue, Mercury Green, Scott-Atwater Green, Champion Blue, Fire Red (for gasoline cans) and Scott-Atwater Gold. For general marine use, the new lacquer is also available in Black, White and Dull Aluminum, and there is a clear acrylic spray for waterproofing electrical systems.

FWFT&T especially likes the fast-drying, salt water resistant qualities of Plasti-Kote Marine Lacquer, plus the product's convenience and easy application with marine-way results. Field tests have also indicated that the new lacquer is remarkably resistant to gasoline, oil and heavy salt deposits.

A twelve ounce, self-spraying can sells for $1.69. Look for it in sporting goods stores, paint stores, automotive supply stocks and wherever marine supplies are sold. Direct orders will be handled by Plasti-Kote, Inc., 425 Lakeside Avenue, N. W., Cleveland 13, Ohio.

GOOD OLD DAYS

(Continued from Page 37)

ually to the river, the climate is delightful, and annoying insects comparatively few."

This concern over insects pops up again and again during this period. One writer states that the flea is the "fiercest animal in Florida." His advice for avoiding the critter as much as possible includes camping in high pine woods, keeping the dogs away from the tents, and above all staying away from "cracker" houses.

An overly adventurous explorer of the Everglades, who seems to have spent some twenty years camping, hiking, riding, and sailing the peninsula, states that three-fourths of Florida is underwater during part of the year and recommends a canoe as standard equipment for any traveler. He also names Mr. O. A. Quartermain, who lived on the Indian River, as the best hunter of his day. "His record of fifty-one deer and fourteen bears in one season is a hard one to beat." Anybody care to disagree?

While in Indian River territory, our 1870 sportsman participated in fire hunting. He seems to have about the same opinion the 1950 sportsman has of it. Rather facetiously, he details "the principal charm of fire hunting lies in the uncertainty attending it as to what you may kill. . . . There is one gentleman near Fort Capron always successful. He never goes out without returning with some trophy of his skill. A few nights before I left he bagged a fine mare and colt, and was convinced that if he'd kept on he'd have killed a deer."

Across the state at Tampa, springtime still brings tarpon fever, but some ideas about the Silver King have changed since this:

"The tarpum I have not seen. It is also rare, and is described to belong to the mackerel family, growing to the weight of 80 to 100 pounds." To avoid an immediate squabble with the good people of the Tampa-St. Pete section, we'll say right now that our old friend erred slightly. As any good citizen from Tampa-way will tell you, the "tarpum" ain't rare, it goes to sizes considerably in excess of 100 pounds, and it also ain't a mackerel!

To err a little more and thus be more human, "It is rarely taken with hook and line, as it generally carries away the tackle, however strong. It goes in schools, and leaps from the water when struck, whether with hook or spear. The only successful way of killing the tarpum, I am told, is to strike it with a harpoon, to which is attached by a strong line a small empty cask; the fish by struggling with this buoy, exhausts itself so that it may be approached in a boat and killed with a lance." The method is different, but when it comes to acrobatics and fighting technique, there's no doubt what fish this fellow was writing about.

A little later in the 19th Century, another writer who had, by the way, learned how to spell tarpon, put it this way:

"With a tremendous rush, a huge silvery gleaming monster flung himself completely out of the water, shaking his head savagely. Down he came in a splash of white foam. . . . Once, twice, four times he cast his whole length into the air in his mad struggles. The water foamed and boiled as he fell and sank, to almost immediately reappear, hurling himself high into the air, shaking his head as a dog shakes a rat, his blood-red gills showing in striking contrast to his gleaming silver body."

As this fish weighed 120½ pounds, it proves that the tarpon grew some 20 pounds between 1875 and 1896.

In '75, Tallahassee was especially recommended to the bachelor sportsman "on account of the number, the beauty, and the charming manners of the ladies." For married sportsmen, the quail shooting was recommended.

"In every direction for miles from the town are wide fields which swarm with quail. A fair day's shooting—allowing the sportsman to take his breakfast at a reasonable hour, and start leisurely, returning for supper at dark—for a good shot and

(Continued on Next Page)

a good dog, is not less than from 60 to 140 birds." That's a lot of picking!

No, huntin' and fishin' ain't what it used to be. No Indians with malicious intent. Instead of pushing, steaming, or sailing, you can crank up the kicker. Instead of taking about a week to get to Florida from New York, you can make it in hours. There are good accommodations practically everywhere and one or several chemicals can put fleas or any other insect to rout.

It's changed in other ways, too. It just makes a body wonder if there's a connection between an 1875 bag of "60 to 140" quail and the extensive work of providing quail food, cover, etc., the Game Commission finds necessary to continue quail in the 1956 hunter's bag.

END.

BULL-HEADED BASS

(Continued from Page 34)

my first scheme didn't work, they durn sure couldn't catch her in there. My insurance, sort of an ace in the hole you might say. The rest was as easy as pie. I took the bag and slipped in and out of Ben's shed with no trouble at all.

Next morning I wouldn't get out of bed when Dad came in to wake me. I was beginning to get scared at what I'd done, but he thought it was because of the way he'd acted yesterday at Ben's. He felt my head and stood there a long time before he left and his face made me want to cry. Maybe I did a little because of the way he thought I felt, mostly thinking about the licking I'd begun to expect. I heard the car door slam and the motor start, then the next thing I knew the sun was bright with the back-door slamming and his footsteps heavy on the stairs.

I scrunched down under the covers, but I had to look when he came through the door. He had a funny look with his eyes sort of shiny-like.

"You ketch her?" I asked, my durn voice squeaking like it always did at the wrong time.

"No," he grinned sort of proud, "we didn't try. Ben said tell you to come out and clean the oranges out of his tackle box and fish a little. You can use my stuff—after you get the rocks out of it. We found her in the well and turned her loose for you. What'd she take?"

"Worms," I said.

"Good goshalmighty!" he roared, stomping off down the stairs. He's an awful purist at times. END.

MUZZLE FLASHES

(Continued from Page 39)

special grips. Common practice is to remove the factory grips; rough them thoroughly on the outside; clean them with grease dissolving naphtha or carbontetrachloride type solution, and then apply wood putty in two or three successive layers. In forming the final shape, great care should be taken to correctly fit the gun to the hand, by holding it so that the back of the grip is well into the notch between thumb and index finger, with all other fingers in proper and related positions. If oil is rubbed over the hands before taking the final impression, the applied wood putty will not stick to the skin.

When the plastic impression is hard, the grips can be sanded smooth and attractively finished. Checkering is usually not necessary as the molded natural ridges and hollows formed by the impression of the shooter's hand tend to give the gun-hand firm anchorage. Because of their basic design such molded grips make the holding of the stock practically identical from shot to shot. "Grip-Mold," a putty-like slow setting plastic, is often used instead of plastic wood for these highly individualistic creations.

If the work is given to a professional, custom-made handgun grips, like a made-to-measure suit, are apt to seem expensive to the handgun owner making his first such purchase, but their value and judicious investment become apparent with use.

Yes, custom-made handgun grips *are usually necessary* to enjoyment of best handgun accuracy and comfortable, scientific control of the weapon, *and* in represented time and money their early acquisition is *definitely worthwhile.* END.

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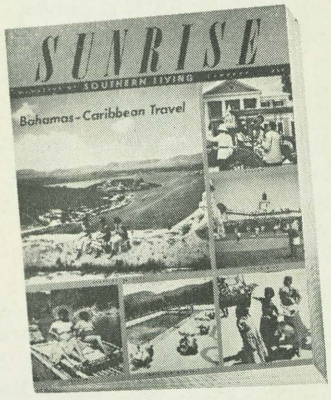

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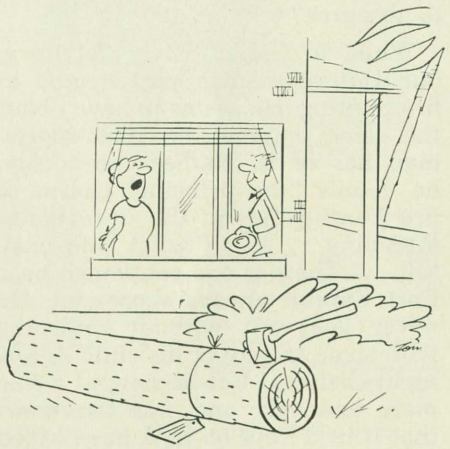

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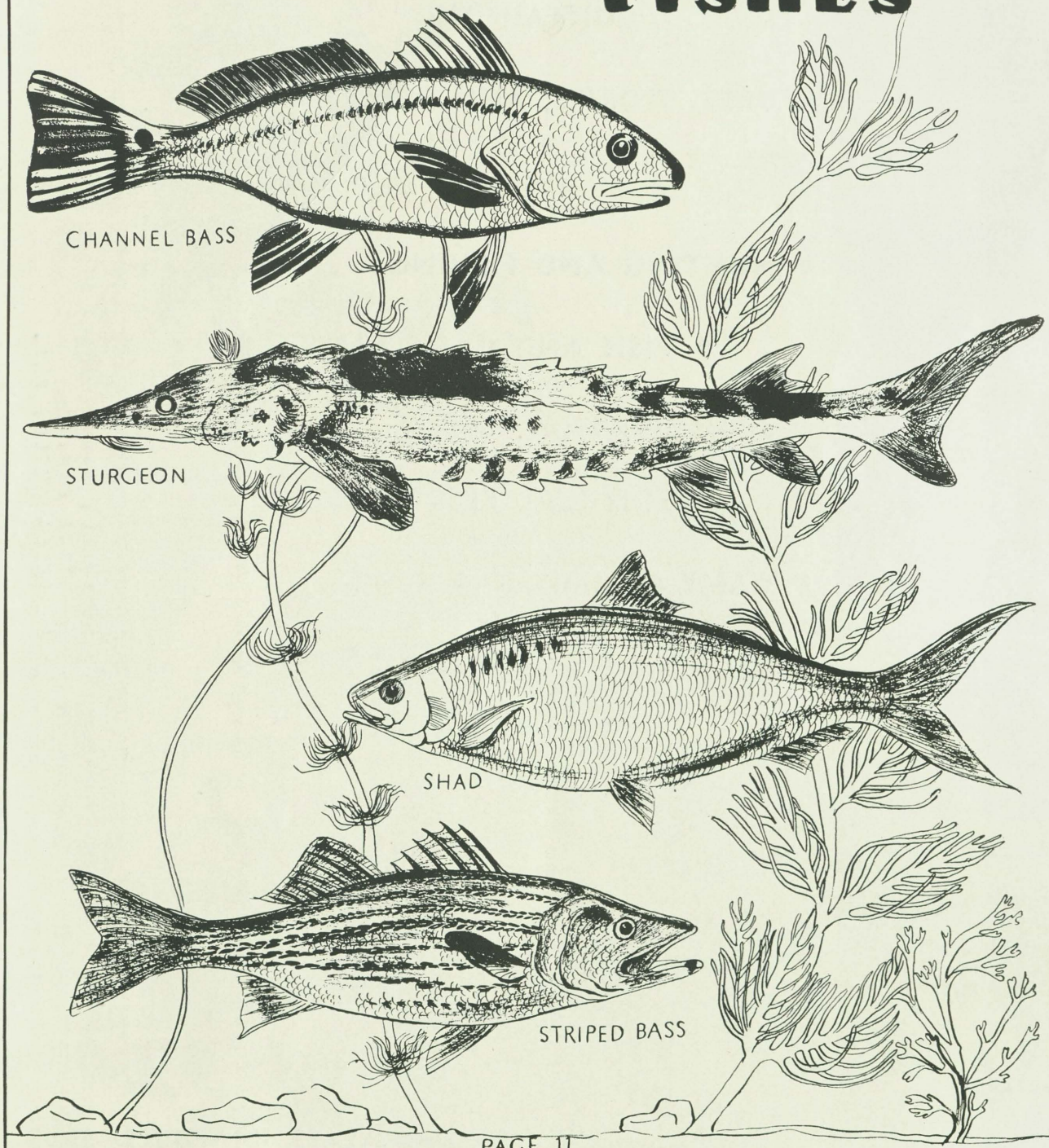

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